



Celebrating independence

The down-home feel of Hilton Village's long standing neighborhood celebration draws hundreds

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Do you want to celebrate the Fourth of July but don't want to hassle with the busy crowds that flood city events? A good option could be the Hilton Village neighborhood parade.

The historic Hilton Village neighborhood has been hosting their "down-home" parade for more than 80 years, according to president of the neighborhood association, John Lash.

Lash, who has been participating in the parade since he was a child, has helped bring the parade together for the past 20 years.

For neighborhood residents, it is something they just know about and once 9:45 a.m. rolls around on July 4 residents can be spotted toting along their folding chairs down to the corner of Main Street and Piez Avenue to await the homemade floats.

"They get their kids ready and use red, white and blue streamers for the kid's bicycles," Lash said.

One of the big attractions of the parade are the younger residents scooting along the four blocks from Main Street down to River Road on their bicycles, where the parade ends at the Hilton Elementary grounds.

There is no registration required prior to the event and there are no "best in show" awards given to the homemade floats because, as Lash said, it's not a commercial parade.

"We try to keep it family friendly and make it about the kids."

The parade is not a very long one and only goes on for four blocks but it is packed with a lot to see such as kids showing off their decked out bicycles or tricycles, pets pulling their owners along, an antique car chugs military vehicles and the horn and siren sounds from a firetruck.

Once the parade participants finish the route at the school, the antique cars, military vehicles and firetruck are displayed there for patrons to snap photos of or to explore.

This year the big hit, according to Lash, will be Pelican's SnoBalls that will help stave off dry mouths on a warm July day.

It is not exclusive to Hilton Village residents but open to everyone and Lash says that hundreds of people show up each year.

The parade features a multitude of participants of all ages from seniors to infants, pets, floats, music, elected officials, Girl and Boy Scout troops and church groups.

Sidewalks are lined with lawn chairs and neighbors chatting before and during the parade, some reunite after years of not seeing one another and enjoy the patriotic, homey parade.

"The neat thing about it is that some people come back from out of town," he said, "they bring their kids to experience what they did as children."

And because the parade draws a big crowd there are road closures to be mindful of: Main Street and Warwick Boulevard, River Road and Main Street, Hilton Terrace and River Road. After the parade has made its way to Hilton Elementary, the barricade at Main and Warwick will be taken down.



Above: Hilton residents began lining up their folding chairs along Main Street around 9:45-10 a.m. every Fourth of July to watch the neighborhood parade. Though just a four-block event, the parade draws hundreds of people, according to organizer John Lash.

At left: The parade features kids on bicycles that are decked out in red, white and blue, plus a fire truck and antique car show.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PATRICIA VORHOF

Below: Historic Hilton Village has hosted a Fourth of July parade for more than 80 years.

JOE FUDGE/DAILY PRESS FILE PHOTO

Find out more

The Hilton Village parade begins at 10 a.m. today. It starts at the corner of Main Street and Piez Avenue and finishes at Hilton Elementary on River Road. Participants line up at 9:30 a.m. and the parade begins promptly at 10 a.m.

NOTEBOOK

Coalition to hold programs on health

Here's an intriguing title for a community environmental health symposium: Is my neighborhood killing me? The Southeast CARE Coalition will host three symposiums on that topic for Newport News residents on July 13, Aug. 31 and Sept. 28. The programs will be at different locations, but all will hold registration from 9:30 to 10 a.m., with the program beginning at 10 a.m. and lasting until 2:30 p.m.

In a press release, the coalition, which bills itself as a community-based partnership created to address environmental concerns in the Southeast Community, said the symposiums have three goals: to raise awareness of the links between environmental pollution exposure and associated health risks, to educate citizens about environmental pollution emissions specific to the Southeast Community and to establish and prioritize a list of environmental concerns for the community. The symposiums are free and open to the public.

The July 13 event will be at the Greater Hampton Roads Boys and Girls Club, 629 Hampton Ave.

The Aug. 31 symposium will be at Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center 2410 Wickham Ave.

The Sept. 28 program will be at Gethsemane Baptist Church 5405 Roanoke Ave.

The keynote speaker for the July 13 symposium will be Vernice Miller-Travis, who has worked 25 years in the field of environmental justice.

Organizers suggest community residents register early, either online at www.southeast-care.com or in person at the Merion Community House, 2101 Jefferson Ave.

Tweeting on the Fourth

You know from the story in today's Town Square that Newport News is holding its annual July 4 celebration at Victory Landing Park. But did you know the event is something of a 'Tweet-up'? If you use Twitter, follow the event at @NNEvents. There will be a twitter contest during the evening event. Prizes will be awarded at the park during the event. So Tweet away and remember to use a hashtag (# in front of key words) to make your Tweet go further. You can use #HRVA to land it on local Twitter feeds. Try #July4 to reach a wider audience. Good luck.

Films by the fountain returns

This is what in theater stage management we used to call a "long warning." Newport News Parks and Recreation will bring back the Family Films by the Fountain program in August. Every Saturday during that month the city will screen a free film at City Center Fountain Plaza. Pre-show entertainment will start at 7 p.m. Films screen at 8 p.m. For information, visit the Parks and Recreation Department's website: <http://www.nngov.com/parks-and-recreation/festivals>

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LOOK WHO'S BACK!

Oh Boys!

Three great groups equals three times the fun. When New Kids on the Block asked Boyz II Men and 98 Degrees to join forces this summer, they created an irresistible — and lucrative — Package Tour for fans.

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