

## "Let's Have a Parade"

Everybody loves a parade. The image of the famous "Professor Harold Hill" leading the parade down the street with school band and shiny new instruments is one that we can all visualize. What we can't visualize is the amount of litter that any parade today tends to generate. All you need to do to experience the litter level is become a spectator at any parade - watch what happens during the parade and then stick around after the parade is done. Look down the street and you will see what I mean.

I'm not sure where the idea started, but in recent years almost all of the parades encourage or at least condone providing candy and other items to the spectators along the way. Several things happen - if those items are not handed out by someone walking along with the parade the items are thrown and land on the parking and on the street. Much of it is run over by floats and other entrants in the parade. Another side effect is that children tend to become too intent on getting the candy that they forget to watch out for the vehicles and floats resulting in a high potential for trouble. Other-non candy items that are handed or thrown out, also often end up being discarded along the parade route.

In addition to the parade participants, the spectators also become a source of litter. Many of those spectators have arrived early to "claim" a spot along the route. They also bring along refreshments to consume during the parade - candy, sandwiches, beverages, snacks, etc. Frequently the packaging from these items ends up on the parking, the neighbor's lawn or yard or in the street.

The normal response to the litter at the end of the parade is for the city to clean up the street, etc. The expense for a community can be significant. It is a cost that we can avoid or at least reduce with some pre-planning.

- The following are some of the things that can be done include:
- Publicizing the parade as a "litter free event"
- Encouraging the parade organizers to provide portable waste receptacles along the route.
- Asking the organizers to put a "clean-up deposit" down when getting the permit. If the cost of clean up is less than the deposit the organizers can get a refund. If it is more than the amount the community will retain the deposit so that the taxpayer does not have to pay the full cost of litter clean up.
- The event should have an element at the start of the parade that lets people know it is a litter free event. They may also encourage a volunteer clean up crew at the end of the parade.
- When issuing the parade permit the community may want to consider putting in a provision that items can not be distributed or if they are they can not be thrown and must be placed directly in the hands of a spectator.
- The permit can also require the organizers to distribute litter bags during the parade and to ask people to pass them around.

Each community may think of additional ways to help reduce the need to clean up after ourselves. Again the old adage - "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is appropriate.

LET'S HAVE A "LITTER FREE" PARADE!!!! LETS MAKE IT CLEAN!!!

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