

Independence Day 2018 Parade Entry: *Our Environment--Do Your Part*

Volunteers from three organizations, the Havre de Grace Green Team, Harford County Climate Action and the Havre de Grace Maritime Museum, entered “*Our Environment: Do Your Part*” with a group of thirty marchers/riders and a float in the Havre de Grace Independence Day Parade July 1, 2018. Our efforts were rewarded with first place wins in non-profit float and best representation of a theme categories. We divided the prize money (two hundred dollars) between the three groups.



The float featured a “tree” fashioned from large and small tree limbs festooned with reusable water bottles, America flags and red, white and blue stars labeled recycle, refuse, reduce and reuse. The float also had numerous reusable grocery bags to emphasize the need to kick-the-plastic-bag habit. The float was decorated with burlap and twine avoiding the use of any plastic trim and ties. It included handmade banners asking parade goers to become good environmental stewards. Fresh oak leaves were added to the “tree” at the last minute. Bales of straw provided seating on the float.

Ahead of the float, two schoolgirls carried an eight-foot professionally made banner that said “Our Environment: Do Your Part.” Behind the banner marchers carried signs about recycling or about not using drinking straws. Wendy Doring from Harford County Office of Recycling marched with us decked out in her Myrtle the Turtle costume. One marcher was dressed like a Maryland crab with a sign that said “Litter makes me crabby.” Another marcher was dressed as the Statue of Liberty declaring independence from plastic, and another had plastic forks glued to her back. Danielle Wolfe, HdG Green Team Recycling Director, carried a picture frame “I am the solution to plastic pollution” and quite a few families took photos of their children with their kids’ face inside the frame.

Ennise Bloom carried a large umbrella cleverly decorated with recyclables and captions about sustainable living. Harford County Climate Action members held STOP or GO signs while wearing or carrying “go” items -- reusable containers for example -- or “stop” items such as plastic straws or non-reusable plastic bottles.

The pickup truck that pulled the float belongs to Carol and John Zimmerman with John driving behind the marchers. Al Peteraf borrowed a friend’s trailer for us to use for the float and he supplied a sound system. We had a playlist of environmental songs but it turned out that our sound unit was not loud enough. Carole Andrews, Carol and John Zimmerman, Mary Ward, Janet Carrick, Pam Dehmer and Jean Johnson were the primary volunteers doing the decorating over several days prior to the parade. Donations from Bruce Russell, Carol Zimmerman, Carole Andrews, Mary Ward, Harford County Climate Action, Big House Signs and Jean Johnson helped to cover materials needed.

Our entry last year “Treasure the Bay,” with the same group of three organizations, won first prize in the non-profit, non-float category. We are already brainstorming for a good theme for next year. We hope to reuse some of the decorations (burlap fringe especially) next year as getting the float decorated this year was a lot of work. Several of us did work (sewing and other tasks) at home as well as work sessions at the museum and in Jean’s driveway and a trip to Cecil County to measure the trailer.

The two banners made by Big House Signs in Havre de Grace are stored at the Maritime Museum and may be borrowed. They are eight feet wide and can easily be attached to a bamboo pole for carrying or hung as they have many grommets.

The date for next year’s Havre de Grace Parade and Fireworks is Saturday, July 6, 2019.

Jean Johnson and Carol Zimmerman