



Costume parade exemplifies the community spirit of Alpenfest.

Walking with style, spirit

Community participation is what the Alpenfest Costume Parade has been about from the very beginning of the festival.

Ernie Grocock, Alpenfest Committee member, said the costume parade was intended to give people in the community an opportunity to become involved in Alpenfest even if they didn't have time to work on the event.

Participants must have some kind of Alpine costume, Grocock said — from a minimum of a hair-piece for the women and suspenders for the men, all the way to full costumes including lederhosen for the men and dresses

for the women.

He said around 600 to 800 people take part in the parade every year.

Music for the parade is provided by members of the Northern Michigan Community Band, who ride on a flatbed truck and play polka music.

Grocock said the parade route begins just west of the railroad tracks on Main Street and proceeds east on the north side of Main, up through the artisans' booths on the Alpenstrasse.

It then turns around at Center Street and goes west on the south side of Main Street back to its origin.

The Alphorn leads the parade, Grocock said, and somewhere near the front he himself marches with the original handmade Alpenfest flag. The flag was made by Grocock's daughter, Jan, around 1972.

After the parade, many of the participants stay on the Alpenstrasse for the World's Largest Coffee Break.

In the past prizes were given at the parade, and in 1967 Grocock's family was awarded a prize for "Most Handsomely Dressed Family."

No prizes are presently awarded, he added.

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