

Hundreds watch 65th Annual Fourth of July parade in East Smithfield

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TOP PHOTO: Civil War re-enactors, who are members of the 141st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, Company A, re-load their rifles with blanks after discharging them during the parade.



Review Photo/JAMES LOEWENSTEIN
Re-enactors from the 141st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, Company A, discharge blanks in their replica Springfield rifles Thursday on the village green in East Smithfield. At the podium is Kurt Lafy, first lieutenant with Company A.

[Image Gallery for Hundreds watch 65th Annual Fourth of July parade in East Smithfield](#)

Annual Fourth of

July event draws hundreds

EAST SMITHFIELD - Of the 65 Fourth of July parades that have taken place in East Smithfield, Thursday's might have been one of the more unusual ones.

For starters, there was a cannon on the back of East Smithfield Hardware's float that would periodically shoot a T-shirt, which had been rolled up into a cylinder and secured in place with rubber bands, up into the air, so that it would land a half-block away, giving a parade-watcher a free article of clothing.

Then there was East Smithfield resident Kate Cavazza, who is a member of a crew team at Susquehanna University and who traveled in the parade in a kayak. The boat was fastened to the roof of a vehicle that was decorated in red, white and blue.

The parade also featured a privately owned fire engine. Stevensville resident Harry Brown said he and his wife own the 25-foot-long truck, which was built in 1940 and which used to be owned by New Milford's fire department.

The parade, which was viewed by hundreds of spectators, was part of the annual Independence Day celebration on East Smithfield's village green. The event also featured a Chinese auction, a chicken barbecue, Civil War re-enactors, a cruise-in of antique and classic cars, and more.

"We came to see the parade" and have also have been looking at the old cars that were on display at the event, which "look good," said Wen Gao of Athens, who attended the event with his daughter, Victoria.

After the parade was over, local Civil War historian Kurt Lafy gave a talk on the green about soldiers from northwestern Bradford County who had served in the Civil War.

The Civil War "was the first war in the history of mankind where soldiers were literate," so soldiers wrote letters and kept diaries and journals in the war, Lafy said, explaining where he got his information.

Lafy talked specifically about the soldiers who belonged to the 141st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, Company K, whose 100 members came from the Ridgebury, East Smithfield and Springfield Township areas as well as from Sullivan County.

The captain of Company K, Charles Mercur, had feet that were described as small and "dainty," and one day during the Civil War, he found his boots had been stolen, Lafy said.

It was discovered that the boots were stolen by a Charles Norton, who was serving as a valet to another captain in the Union army. Norton was later unmasked as a woman, Lafy said.

Lafy also talked about an Albert Phelps, a soldier from Smithfield Township whose mother had written to President Lincoln asking that her son be allowed to come home for a visit.



Image Gallery for Hundreds watch 65th Annual Fourth of July parade in East Smithfield

Lincoln actually granted her wish, and Phelps did return home for a visit, Lafy said.

But the visit was the last time Phelps' mother would see him, as he died later in the Civil War, said Lafy, who serves an officer in a local Civil War re-enactment group.

Lafy also announced that there will be dedication ceremony marking the installation of a headstone for John B. DePew, who survived the Civil War and who was struck and killed by a train that was traveling through the Valley in 1900.

DePew was buried in the Tioga Point Cemetery with no headstone. A headstone for DePew has been ordered by the Veterans Administration, Lafy said.

Lafy said he hoped the headstone would be installed later this year.

Dan Lenox, assistant chief of the Smithfield Township Volunteer Fire Company, said the East Smithfield Fourth of July celebration was expected to raise several thousand dollars for the fire company, mostly from the sale of food.

The fire company sold out of its barbecued chicken, including 220 chicken halves, and was also expected to sell out the 200 hamburgers and 200 hot dogs that were available at the event, Lenox said.

"A lot of people will give a pretty good donation" for their food, which is higher than the sale price of the food, he said.

A total of 64 gift baskets, which consisted of donated items, were raffled off at the event to raise money for the fire company.

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