

Halloween Parade a Perinton Tradition for 79 Years

On Friday, October 25th, Perinton Recreation and Parks and the Fairport Rotary Club will co-sponsor the annual Halloween Parade in the village of Fairport. The origin of this community tradition can be traced back to 1934, under the leadership of local tailor and community-minded citizen, Sam Jacobson. Perhaps some of our most seasoned residents participated in the early parades, which were begun as a way to provide the youth of the community with a healthy alternative to pranks and destructive activity, as was described in the Fairport Herald-Mail in August of 1934:

“Halloween season is one in which the youth of the community cuts loose and indulges in pranks which in some cases are not only annoying but destructive to property. Recognizing the need for the young to have some kind of expression of their sense of humor, is it not possible to so direct their energies that they will be directed into worthwhile channels, constructive instead of destructive.”

The Fairport Rotary Club accepted the challenge and took the initiative to sponsor the first Halloween celebration, and have been involved ever since. The Fairport schools, the Fairport Fire Department, and merchants worked together in creating a community-wide celebration for residents of all ages.

By 1938, the parade had grown to include participants from other communities. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts created parade floats, and the Fairport High School marching band played. Farmer David Hull of Howell Road drove a team of oxen down the parade route, pulling an enormous hay wagon, followed by others driving their horses and ponies. Business owners decorated their storefront windows with Halloween-themed displays and made donations in support of the festivities. When the parade was completed, dances were held at both the Fire Hall and the High School gymnasium.

For many years to come, Sam Jacobson continued to organize the annual Halloween activities through the support of the Fairport Rotary Club. A beloved citizen known for his sense of humor, “little Sam”, as he was known, was often seen observing the activities. He joked that he kept rocks in his pockets to keep from blowing away. Sam died in 1962 at the age of 96, but still the Halloween Parade continued.



A few of the hundreds of participants in the 2012 Halloween parade.

Now 79 years after the original Halloween festivities, the young and not so young will again assemble for the annual event. Participants will meet at the Minerva Deland school parking lot by 6:00 PM, and march north to Potter Park. Complimentary doughnuts and cider will be provided by the Fairport Fire Department. Costume judging will take place at Potter Park, with prizes for “Best Costume”, “Most Original”, “Group”, and “Funniest”, for several age groups. Just as they did in 1934, witches, goblins, and princesses will gather to march in the parade. They will be joined by Power Rangers, Spiderman, and Hello Kitty, to name a few. Come join us, and be a part of this Perinton tradition. There is no charge to participants. For more information, contact Perinton Recreation and Parks.