



MEMBERS OF THE Worcester County Shrine Club got their vehicles ready at the staging area for the West Boylston Parade.

Worcester County Shrine Club At the West Boylston Parade

By HERMES BOYATIS

Shiners across the world, as well as mothers, fathers, little kids, and warriors, have times to forget, times filled with memories, and times rich in hope for the future.

There are D-Days; MIA Days; SOS Days; Olympiads; Valentine Days, and MORE!

Such a day of dreams still coming true occurred on September 21, 2008, in West Boylston, Massachusetts, in celebration of that town's bicentennial. Naturally, a parade, banners, interviews with special people, contests, and much more were required for such a day to remember!

Your editor was caught up in the midst of all the events, riding with others in a van driven by our man of steel, **Norm Peterson**. Very important in the planning, and funding of the day was Noble **Savvas Fotiadis** of Manor Restaurant and Function Hall. Because of his spirited commitment, he recruited hundreds of Shriners from other states. As for his hospitality, he provided hamburgers, sausages, gyros, whatever edible delights to those stopping for a rest along the parade route. His mother sat happily greeting the passers-by!

Chairman of all the events was **Valmore Pruneau**, with more than fifty supporters. Celebrated were the landmarks of West Boylston. Once a productive mill town, the building of the Wachusett Reservoir changed the future, providing fresh water not only for the town, but all the way to Boston!

The downside came when the houses and buildings were relocated, then destroyed, and the green fields and trees there were gone forever. The happy result of that fabled past was Boylston's Bicentennial celebration!

Congratulations came from the Rotary Club; several plumbing and heating firms; construction businesses; automobile dealers; farms, groceries, delicatessens, and restaurants; waste management companies; banks, There were just TOO MANY to list in the space provided before press-time, so please forgive your editor.

Young people interpreted their town with essays: **Kaleigh Ryder, John Welch, Matthew Gomes,** and **Nicole Ellis** gave a look to the future of their hometown.

There were banners, bells, and a logo! What an experience for eyes, stomachs, ears, and good hearts! The parade was more than a mile-and-a-half long. It started at Salter College, past the Post Office; stopped at the announcement and food areas; went past the First Congregational Church; the lighting department; Goodale Park; and finally, at Major Edwards School.

Leading the parade as Grand Marshals were **Gwen** and **Bob Soule**. We saw them waving delightedly from a Model-T Ford. A biography supplied by Parade Chairman **Christopher Rucho** shows that the Soules have a lifetimes worth of benevolent giving.

We forgot to mention a school assembly, a grand ball, and four years of planning before we traveled the memorable route. How we waved at the crowds, all of us clowning, canning Shriners! We threw out lollipops to the kids, and other Clown's goodies. Followed came an invitation to the Savvas Fotiadis Manor, now like West Boylston, rebuilding and hopeful for the future.

There is more, much more to come. Promised are fireworks and a performance by the Minuteman Marching Band of the University of Massachusetts during all the school's half-time repertoires.

We said it before. We repeat. What a day to remember!

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