

PATRIOTIC CROWDS TURN OUT FOR PARADE

May 30, 2017 at 4:00 pm | By [Hillary Gavan \(mailto:hgavan@beloitdailynews.com\)](mailto:hgavan@beloitdailynews.com)



Hillary Gavan/Beloit Daily News Leah Reil, 7, proudly holds a flag during the Memorial Day Parade in downtown Beloit on Monday.

BELOIT - Many of those lining the streets and waving flags at the Memorial Day parade on Monday were thinking of family members who had served, as well as those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

"We came to the parade to support our veterans," said Craig Dean.

Memorial Day activities kicked off in Beloit and South Beloit at 6:30 a.m. with a wreath laying ceremony put on by the Marine Corps League at Beloit's Rotary River Center.

Crowds filled downtown Beloit and Blackhawk Boulevard as the parade traveled from Fourth Street and West Grand Avenue through downtown Beloit to Blackhawk Boulevard, ending at South Beloit City Park. The day also featured a ceremony at the veterans memorial in South Beloit City Park, and VFW Post 2306 held a remembrance ceremony at the East Lawn Cemetery in Beloit, where a new veterans section was dedicated.

Many little children waved little flags as patriotic music by local school bands filled the air. The parade also featured dancers, martial arts performances and plenty of polished firetrucks. Many local businesses had decorated cars and created floats for the big event. Many parade walkers tossed out candy to eager children armed with plastic sacks and smiles.

Craig Dean and Kristen Fye of Janesville brought their children Liam Dean, 5 months, and Breckyn Dean, 2. Craig said he works for ABC Supply Co. and always likes coming to Beloit for Memorial Day. After the parade the family was going to go out to the parks. Kristen said she likes Beloit's downtown with many homegrown restaurants.

Mackenzie Waggoner had brought her 1-year-old daughter Marionna McEachin out to the parade as well as her little cousins Sydnee Elliott, 6, and Lucie Elliott, 3. She said it was her first time to the parade and she wanted to honor her brother who is a Marine and her dad who is a veteran.

Jessica Reed added that her dad is a veteran and she comes to the parade every year.

"We like going to downtown Beloit for the parade, and it's the perfect day for it," Jamie Reil said.

Those who performed or rode floats were also enjoying the patriotic spirit of the day and honoring those who served.

South Beloit's M & M Dari Ripple Server Joyce Blade and owner Mike Peterson and staff were riding in or walking alongside their 1930 Model A Ford. With it being the 25th anniversary of Dari Ripple and 65 years for it being in existence, everyone was eager to show off the car. They said coming to the parade is a family affair where everyone can honor veterans.

"I like that it's local, and it's for our veterans," Blade said.

Brooklynne Hereford-Foster, 9, and Beyonca Hereford-Foster, 9, were tossing out candy to help bring awareness to the School District of Beloit summer feeding program. The two said they enjoyed seeing the kids jumping up and down for candy, and getting to eat that which they didn't toss to others.

Rock County Christian School Homecoming King Addison Davila and Queen Maddie Hill said they each had veterans in their family and were glad to show their support via a vehicle this year.

Parade Marshall Gail Scanlan, a member of the parade committee for 30 years, said Monday marked her 52nd year seeing the parade.

"I'm an Air Force veteran and a 50-year member of the South Beloit American Legion Auxiliary," she said.

Scanlan said the parade is a wonderful salute to veterans. However, she said she hopes the parade does not include throwing candy in the future. She said the parade is not teaching kids the meaning of Memorial Day.

The parade included five sections: the American Legion, the South Beloit American Legion, the Marine Corps League, the Rock County Disabled American Veterans and VFW Post 2306. Each section had its own units and own local high school or middle school band accompanying them.