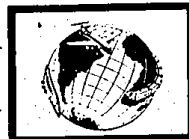


# Travel Scene

Iris Sanderson Jones - editor



60\*\*

U.S.E. Thursday, December 27, 1990

## They know how to party

### Mummers Parade attracts all kinds in Philadelphia

By Nicki and Harold Chodoff  
special writers

It's a 12-hour party on Broad Street in Philadelphia: princes, clowns, devils and angels, in sequins, satins and feathers, all marching to the sound of music, the strains of banjos and glockenspiels.

It's New Year's Day in Philadelphia and time for the annual Mummers Parade, which has the madness of Mardi Gras mixed with melting-pot immigrant customs.

The parade's history goes back to 1876 when mummers marched to Independence Hall accompanied by New Year's Shooters, comic masqueraders who rode the streets shouting, firing guns and occasionally killing fellow merry-makers. City officials tried to contain the rowdiness when they took the parade over in 1901.

Today, the city distributes more than \$200,000 in prize money among the four parade divisions and 25,000 participants who march 2½ miles up Broad Street every New Year's Day with spectators lining the route and a million more from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware watching on television.

Leading the parade at 7:45 a.m. is the Comic Division with prancing, dancing, colorful clowns wielding parasols as they strut to the Mummers theme, "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers," composed by Philadelphia James Bland in 1879. Floats and presentations comically satirize current events and everyday life.

Elaborately dressed marchers make up the Fancy Division, accompanied by brass bands, bigger-than-life floats and frame suits.

The String Band Division, the most popular unit, marches in mid-afternoon. It's made up of plumed, bespangled musicians, at least 40 men per club. Banjos and glockenspiels mark time as ornately-garbed captains perform precision drills and dance routines.

The Fancy Brigade Division features embellished captain's floats and spectacularly costumed march-



Philadelphians get out their fancy clothes every New Year's Day and dance through town in the annual Mummers Parade that lasts 12 hours. Some of the costumes weigh more than 100

ers moving in formation. Music from brass bands allow intricate dance routines.

Costumes, particularly in the Fancy and String Band divisions, can

cost several thousand dollars each. Some of the finery, namely the framed costumes, can weigh 300 pounds and be 13 to 14 feet high. String band attire, with back-pieces

strapped to each man by a harness, often weigh as much as 125 pounds. Every club has its own admittance requirements, but one rule holds true — all members are men — a tradi-

tion left intact since the parade's inception. Men become involved with clubs through ethnic affiliation, family or neighborhood ties.

Philadelphia is a city of many dis-

tinct ethnic neighborhoods, all of which maintain a small-town feel. Philadelphians root and cheer mightily for their favorite clubs — from their grand parade entrance, through performance stops along the parade route, to their final performance before the judges.

Judges are professionals, mainly from the performing arts and communication fields, who donate their time. All are well-known in their areas of expertise, but their names are not revealed to the public.

Many mummers begin learning the famed "Mummer's Strut," an off-shoot of the popular 19th century cakewalk dance, as two- or three-year-olds.

In the parade, fathers march beside sons, with three generations from one family strutting together a common sight. Family ties are strong and this spirit and sense of belonging is one of the parade's chief attractions.

The 12-hour parade is the climax of a year of hard work, practice and preparation. The cycle starts anew each year as mummers create new themes for each parade.

New dance routines are devised. Appropriate music is arranged. Local priests register each club's theme to ensure originality and non-duplication.

Work continues throughout the year as dance routines or drills are learned and practiced, music is perfected and costumes made. Fund-raising performances are scheduled throughout the year to defray enormous costume costs which are supplemented by parade prize money and personal contributions from mummers.

Experiencing the parade provides a feel for the real flavor and heart of Philadelphia, away from the usual historic sites and tourist spots. Street-side viewing all along the parade route is free and has the added benefit of standing, elbow-to-elbow, with a cross section of Philadelphians.

Please turn to Page 7

## City of big shoulders proves to be a bonanza for kids, too

By Irene McMahon  
special writer

There was a time when large hotels and resorts were perturbed by juvenile visitors. Not any longer.

Nearly 100 Hyatt hotels and resorts in the U.S., Canada and the Caribbean have initiated supervised weekend activities for children under 15 years of age. Their Camp Hyatt offers special room rates, children's menus, room service and a welcome check-in packet for the kids. My family and I spent such a weekend recently at the Chicago Hyatt Regency.

We started early Saturday morning at the Museum of Science and Industry, a place that could have done us in for the weekend. To avoid this we limited our time to one exhibit per person. Jonathan, 8, chose the story of petroleum with cavemen and woolly mammoths. Mac and I wanted to see the Frank Lloyd Wright exhibit. Meryl, 9, opted for the gift shop.

Before we all developed a bad case of museum feet we headed for the Billy Goat Tavern under Michigan Boulevard. (The children had pushed for McDonald's but we held firm.) Saturdays the long wooden bar is empty and tables at the Billy Goat are filled with families munching hamburgers and grilled cheese sandwiches. Over our heads hung portraits of great Chicago journalists, Maggie Daley, Irv Kupcinet, Bob Cronin and Mike Royko, among others. Our gourmet restaurant advised the hamburgers were at least as good as those at McDonald's.

At noon we checked into our hotel. The flashiness of the Hyatt is in itself an experience for a child from the "burbs." At the desk they received their Camp Hyatt caps, as below in the great Hyatt dancers stepped lightly on the large keyboard of an oversized piano. It was all an exciting promise of things to come, and we registered the kids for that evening's session of Camp Hyatt.

Our 20th floor room provided a

panorama of the Chicago River, the newly renovated 1905 warehouse, North Pier on the Ogden Slip with the locks and Lake Point Tower behind.

Soon we were down on the river for an hour-long excursion through the locks and out into the lake. We had missed a 10:15 a.m. Wacky Boat excursion piloted by pirates, but you can't get everything into one weekend.

Meryl observed every move as we passed through the locks. She learned that they were built a hundred years ago to reverse the flow of the Chicago River and carry our effluvia toward New Orleans.

The start of the Mackinac Race was forming and hundreds of sails seemed an imaginary island in deep water. A red fireboat sent them off with a stream of colored water.

By five o'clock we were back in our room for a wash-up before dinner at the Scamp Restaurant. We watched the sunset reflect off the buildings and the city light up. Jonathan was bereft of a cassette player for his Batman tape but he was pleased with the candy on his pillow and the fact that he wouldn't have to make his bed.

Our table was near the waterfall and there was a special menu for children: Alphabet soup, "big juicy burger" with fries, "hot dogger" and "goey" chocolate cake. This was perceived as an improvement over the Billy Goat.

Camp Hyatt occupied an ordinary hotel meeting room but was supplied with copious slices of pizza and scoops of ice cream, costumes and games.

Apprehension permeated the air as we left behind two reluctant children, the Batman tape and our room number. Meryl Laco and her helpers were in charge. It was reassuring to learn that Meryl holds degrees in

hotel management and recreation.

We returned to our room expecting a knock on the door at any moment. Finally, at 8:30 we checked to see how it was going.

Jonathan stood before an easel displaying his drawing of Batman, telling the story of the movie to the entire group as his tape blasted off in the background.

Meryl had been on a scavenger hunt throughout the hotel and there were samples of cookies they had all made in the kitchen assisted by a pastry chef. Camp Hyatt was a big success.

That night we walked down to the river where a steel band was playing in front of the Wrigley Building. From a hawk on the bridge we bought Batman and Joker T-shirts.

Early Sunday morning we stood on the site of Fort Dearborn, now a watchtower for the brigades, and pointed to the Wrigley Building across the river where Jean Baptiste Point deSable, the city's first non-Indian resident, established his 1772 trading post.

Tables were being assembled in front of the Equitable Building for the annual marathon along Michigan Boulevard. We discovered stones from the Coliseum in Rome, the Pyramids in Egypt, Yale University and Injun Joe's cave in Hannibal, Mo., all embedded in the walls of the Tribune Tower. In the quiet of Sunday morning one feels the city in a more personal way.

Meryl and Jonathan showed limited interest in the red hats of Chicago's former cardinals hanging from the ceiling of Holy Name Cathedral. Brunch in the glass-walled Captain's Walk Restaurant of the Hyatt gave us a view of the last of the marathoners and brought our spectacular weekend to a spectacular finish.



Small visitors to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., might want to follow this little girl's example: Mickey Mouse (Goofy's master), Donald Duck and get a feel for Goofy's big nose and win- and other cartoon stars.

## Disney World trip a success, despite doing everything wrong

By Kathleen Shipley  
special writer

How would a family of four, including two boys ages 14 and 17, fare at Walt Disney World? That was the question I found an answer to this year.

We did nearly everything wrong. We waited until the kids were teenagers to go for the first time, went there in the heart of the summer with the weather at its hottest and the crowds at their largest — and loved it anyway.

The most interesting aspect turned out to be Epcot Center. It's loaded with fabulous exhibits and rides that both the teens and adults found enjoyable.

### reader's report

In Spaceship Earth we were taken on a journey through the vast geosphere that visually identifies Epcot Center. This journey through history from the days of Cro-Magnon man to the present was my younger son's favorite.

Another favorite was Kodak's Journey Into Imagination, an artistic exploration of how our imagination works. In another part of this pavilion the 3-D rock show "Captain EO," starring Michael Jackson, was enjoyed by all.

So was the Image Works, a hands

on activity center that allowed us to try a variety of imaginative exhibits, such as the Lightwriter, which draws geometric designs with laser beams.

Children should be at least 12 years old to go to the most out of Epcot.

There is another section at Epcot called The World Showcase. Here we took a most interesting look at various countries of the world. Each country was represented by shops, restaurants and individual villages or pavilions showcasing a movie or exhibit.

Everything about The World Showcase was sensational. What interested the boys was the food. One day we had lunch at the beautiful

Please turn to Page 7