

# Independence Day parade a success

By ZACH EVERSON

7/7/97

WAKEFIELD - Approximately ten minutes after a B2 Stealth Bomber flew overhead, martians arrived, playing traditional American music and dancing on Main Street, Wakefield, Friday.

No need to call the X-Files or

Men in Black, however. It was all just part of Wakefield's Fourth of July parade, the largest in the state, that also featured "traditional" parade material, such as veteran's groups, bands, floats, classic cars and fire trucks.

The martians were not here to take over Wakefield, although they did manage to captivate the crowd near the reviewing stand in front of the Americal Civic Center for a solid ten minutes. The space creatures were actually the Joseph F. Burke String Band from Philadelphia.

Their performance of "This is My Country" and "Oh When the Saints Go Marching In" drew everyone from children to parade organizers into the streets to dance with them.

Elizabeth "Betty" Shea, the grand marshal of the parade, took her baton and helped lead the pack of musical martians. "They gave me a baton, so I might as well conduct," she said afterward.

She was a member of WAVES during World War II when she helped crack Japan's code. Her work was classified for over 50 years. She even had to keep the

medal she earned a secret.

Shea thoroughly enjoyed the parade. "I just loved it. I had a good time," she said. She observed the proceedings from an easy chair on the reviewing stand where she was surrounded by her family.

The B2 Stealth Bomber came from Missouri to fly over the Esplanade concert in Boston. Although the fly-by was not publicized, parade organizers expected it. "It was a surprise, but we knew it was coming," said Steve Daly, co-chairman of the Wakefield Independence Day Committee.

According to Daly, they were able to arrange for the plane to expand the radius it needed to circle the Hatch Shell from six miles to nine, so that it would pass over the parade route.

The Wakefield Police Department estimates that 5,000 people stood along the parade route.

The weather cooperated with the festivities, with just a few patches of dark clouds in the sky. The only "Stormy Weather" came from the Wachonia

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1

(Minn.) High School Marching Band.

Other bands came from Quebec, Florida, North Carolina, and Ohio - not as far away as Mars, but a good distance nonetheless.

The most notable group was the Cadets of Bergen County (N.J.) who are six time Drum Corps International world champions. They also played in the closing ceremonies of last year's Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

The Boston Crusaders and the Light Brigade Drum and

## Parade...

Bugle Corps from Revere were among the local groups that marched.

The float competition was another highlight of the parade. First place in the large float division went to the Wakefield Girl Scouts whose float celebrated the 85th anniversary of the Girl Scouts.

Their float featured a camping scene, a large birthday cake, and uniforms from each of the Girl Scout's nine decades.

The first place prize did not come without some sacrifices,

however. "It wasn't very comfortable. It was very hot," said Girl Scout Sarah Marith who wore a uniform from the 1920's on the float.

According to the float's co-organizer, Kathy Marith, the scouts had worked on the float since September, when tissue paper was handed out to make flowers.