

UMass band returns to city streets for encore

By CATHERINE BAUM Staff Writer

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NORTHAMPTON – Following the nation's second-largest St. Patrick's Parade in Holyoke Sunday, the University of Massachusetts marching band brought its own parade to Conz Street.

It was the first time the Minutemen marching band had performed in the Holyoke parade in 25 years, and the first time they performed in Northampton in 27 years. The band's last Northampton performance was for the reopening of Hotel Northampton in 1981, according to George Parks, director of the 370-member ensemble.

"It's always exciting to get the band out and playing to new people," Parks said. "We are the region's band, so it's nice."

Parks noted there were about 600,000 people at the Holyoke parade, and there were about 200 people at the Northampton parade.

"This is our intimate performance right here," Parks said.

Show time started after a few buses parked in the Gazette lot, where the young men and women in maroon and white began their short march toward the Senior Center. Families, friends and neighbors stepped aside for the members of the largest band in UMass history as they played drums, trumpets and trombones while crossing the grass.

The first to make way for the band were the Tash children - Eva, 9, Mathilde, 7, and Julia, 5 - who chanted "We love UMass" while jumping up and down with their Northampton neighbors, the Dostals - Simon, 2, and Lucia, 5.

"Our kids love being able to be here - we love music and this is a very convenient chance to come see UMass," said Elena Ciampa, mother of the Dostals. "It's a beautiful day, too."

The band performed Gloria Estefan's "Get on Your Feet," "Anything for You," the UMass fight song and the University of Notre Dame victory march, which marks its 100th anniversary this year. The crowd clapped and danced to the music. A few children, like 19-month-old Giselle Ohm, sat on their parents' shoulders.

"I enjoy when other people enjoy us," said Anthony Guerrero, 19, who plays trumpet for the UMass band.

Following the mini parade, the band and crowd went to the Northampton Senior Center for Killorglin's Irish stew and a performance by the Dicey Riley Rocks for the UMass Band Thank You Party, which was hosted by the Northampton St. Patrick's Association.

Guests at the party, including Kathleen Miller and Lucy Leduc, said they hope UMass comes again next year.

"The mini parade is important for the people of Northampton to be a part of the Irish heritage," said Michael T. Cahillane, a 1987 marshal for the Holyoke parade and member of the Northampton St. Patrick's Association.

"She's carrying on the tradition," Cahillane said of his granddaughter, Madeline Cahillane, 3, who was holding a wooden walking stick.

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