

# SENIOR LIFESTYLES

## St. Pat's parade projects limelight on parishioner

By Kathleen Schwar  
Assistant Editor

Every year, Patricia Kelly Crowley marches in Rochester's festive St. Patrick's Day Parade in step with the rest of the parade committee. At the end of the long route, she has a marshal escort her back to her dance group, the Shannonside Ceili Dancers, behind her husband's float (James Crowley Plumbing & Heating). Then she marches the route again.

This year, however, she will be grand marshal of the March 11 parade. She will lead the 2,000 participants, and then sit in the reviewing stands to watch the entire parade of some 150 units. More than 50,000 people are expected to line the route to watch the parade.

Crowley and other honorees in the parade "represent the best the Irish-American community has to offer Greater Rochester," according to Tom Fitzpatrick, parade chairman.

Crowley, indeed, is honored. "I'm proud of my Irish culture and heritage, but have never considered myself better than others," she said. "I was deeply pleased and happy that this honor was bestowed upon me. I've worked for many years on the parade, but I always feel there is somebody perhaps more worthy than myself."

Crowley and her husband Jim have been involved in the parade since its beginning 23 years ago.

Crowley makes sure that the parade day gets off to a good start by helping to plan the Mass that precedes it. This year's

Mass will be celebrated at 9 a.m. in St. Mary's Church downtown. Bishop Matthew H. Clark will preside.

"It's a wonderful way to start the day," Crowley said.

To her, another one of the parade day's best features is the Celtic Family Fair for families. Added to the festivities last year, it will take place at the Four Points Sheraton hotel. Not only does it entertain children and parents on parade day, "it stresses the importance of family and being together," she said.

Family, music, church and all things Irish are important to the Crowleys, married since 1958. They're the parents of four children and have five grandchildren — and Crowley expects the whole family to take part in the parade as usual. Her three daughters were married at St. Anne Church in Rochester, just as she and her husband were. So were her parents, Marie and the late Lawrence Kelly, in 1933.

"I am a lifelong member of St. Anne's," said Crowley, who has been president of the parish's Rosary Society and active in Scouting.

"They are very unassuming in what they do and don't look for recognition," St. Anne's pastor, Father Frank Lioi, noted of the Crowleys. "They don't seek the limelight. It's probably a bit of a contradiction that she'd be grand marshal."

For the past 15 years Patricia has been a eucharistic minister, taking Communion to residents in The Hurlbut nursing home. She goes with a friend when they have time to spend at the home.

"I try being a good listener," she said. "Many times people stop and just want to



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Above, Pat Crowley tries to make 15-month-old Thomas Ratajewicz smile on March 3 after giving him three shots. A registered nurse, she has worked at Westfall Park Pediatrics for seven years. Below, she checks 6-year-old Mussey Tella's hearing.

talk to me. I feel their needs to communicate are important too. Many don't have visitors frequently."

Crowley enjoys the little ones as much as she does the elderly. A registered nurse, she returned to pediatrics after her own children were grown.

"I always had this deep desire to work, so I went back into pediatrics. I absolutely love my work," she said. She prepares children for routine physicals, sick visits and triages phone calls.

Crowley stays healthy by dancing with the Shannonside Ceili dancers every Monday night. The group gets 20 or so of its 30 members together to perform in nursing homes, adult homes and at community events year-round.

"At this time of year we get very busy because of the upcoming St. Patrick's Day," she said.

The group has members ranging from their early 20s to their 70s, she said. They dance from about 7:30 to 9 p.m. every Monday, "and all of the sudden the time has gone by."

The group welcomes new members, she added. The benefits include a "great form of aerobics" and friendships that develop.

To Crowley, that's what life's all about



— friends and family, caring for others.

As for her upcoming reign as parade grand marshal, she seems a bit uncomfortable. "I'm not a person who likes to be in the limelight," she said.

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