



Newsday Photos by Karen Wiles

Nikki Slovak, 3, gets an old-fashioned makeup job from her mother

They Love a Parade

By Marianne Arneberg

Bellerose—Two-year-old Linda Romano waddled down the front steps of her two-story brick-and-frame house, holding her hands stop her lime-green feathered cap. A loosely fitted sheet wrapped around her tiny body threatened to trip her.

"Bald Eagle," she announced with a grin to a cluster of children—two would-be Indian maidens, two buns and a brightly clad clown—gathered on the carpet-like front lawn at 85-08 247th St.

The children and parents congregating at the Romanos' were putting the finishing touches on the costumes that the youngsters will wear at the neighborhood's annual June Walk tomorrow at 2 P.M.

"You can dress up, you see all the costumes and you see all your friends," explained 11-year-old Susan Reh, looking out from under the tattered cap that completed her bun's outfit.

Susan and her twin sister, Nancy, who live at 248-13 87th Ave., will be among the oldest participants in this year's parade. Dressed as vagrants, the two will help neighborhood resident Bernie Wechsler, who has been dubbed the "Town Clown," to distribute American flags and lollipops to parade participants. And after the parade, they will help distribute soft drinks and ice cream to the crowd. Prizes donated by local banks and the Ideal Toy Co. will be awarded for the best costume and best float in three age categories.

"It's a good opportunity for parents and their children, and we have a lot of single parents in the community, too, to have an outing together," said Lucy Romano, who is organizing the June Walk. "It's a project they can all work on together."

Mrs. Romano said that the annual parade, which started in 1974, was usually held on

or near Flag Day to promote a sense of patriotism among the neighborhood children. Due to a lack of volunteers, the parade—sponsored by the Bellerose Civic Association—was not held last year. But this year, association members fought for its revival. "It's nice because children love traditions and customs," Mrs. Romano said.

In any case, Erik Nielsen, 11, and his 7-year-old brother, Bret, didn't appear to be as interested in patriotism as they were in taping balloons and red, white and blue crepe paper to the running boards of the family's go-cart. "I'm going to push it because you're not allowed engines, and my brother's going to race it," Erik explained, guiding the craft down the front-porch steps of the Romano house for a test run that resulted in crumpled crepe paper and popped balloons.

Two other parade participants—Nikki Slovak, 3, and her sister, Karen, 6, of 86-11 248th St.—stood patiently as their mother, Kitty, applied smudges of black makeup to their faces, completing their Mickey and Minnie Mouse costumes. Patriotism was all but lost to them. The festivities were what mattered most.

Their sister, Kathy, 10, dressed in old Dutch garb, fashioned tulips from pipe cleaners and crepe paper. "It's just fun," Kathy said. "You see all your friends. We were supposed to be Popeye and Olive Oyl and Sweet Pea. But we didn't because I didn't want to be Olive Oyl. I think she's a dumb thing."

The parade is scheduled to begin at the PS 133 playground at 249th Street and 86th Avenue. Participants, in addition to the children, will include the Bellerose-Queens Village-Hollis Volunteer Ambulance Corps and the St. Anastasia's Pils and Drum Bugle Corps of Douglaston.



Bellerose children try out their June Walk outfits