

Flossmoor Traditions Through the Years

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Annual traditions stand out as a time-honored method of bringing a community together, forming bonds and creating shared memories. Often tied in with holidays or seasons, these community events become guideposts that lead residents through their own personal yearly cycle. In this article I will briefly highlight a number of notable traditions—both old and new—from Flossmoor’s first 100 years. Some of these traditions have come and gone and some remain today. Some are almost entirely forgotten. They are organized by season.



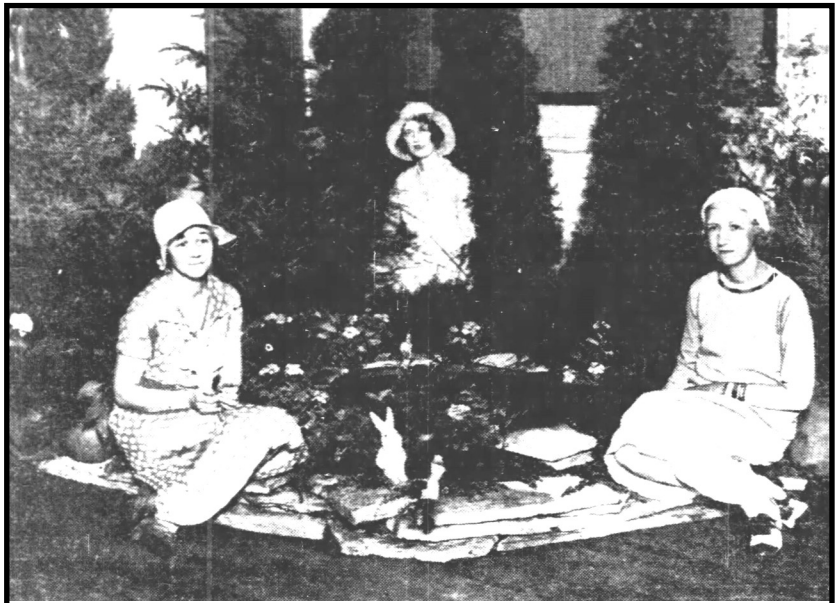
Summer

Flossmoor's Earliest Tradition: The Flower and Garden Show

The Flossmoor Garden Club was one of the earliest community organizations in the village. With large-sized residential lots, Flossmoor was a natural area for home gardening to flourish. As early as 1922, the Garden Club was sponsoring an annual flower and garden show at the end of each growing season, usually in late August. It is not clear where these early shows were held although they likely could have been at the one-room Stelter School on Dixie Highway. By the mid-1920s the show had moved to the Community House in Flossmoor Park.

The show boasted over 200 varieties of flowers on display. Medals would be awarded to winners in several categories ranging from floral arranging to best collection of vegetables. The shows were a big hit. By the late 1920s, they were drawing 2000 attendees a day. They then started offering the show two days instead of just one to increase attendance.

Eventually, with the increasing amounts of exhibits and attendees, the show moved to Leavitt Avenue School and then Parker Junior High School. Around 1960, the garden club ceased having its own independent garden show after over 30 years and instead focused on exhibiting at shows in other communities.



This 1931 photo from the Chicago Tribune provides an example of the Flower and Garden Show's "authentic garden" exhibits. By installing tall shrubs, bushes, flowers and a small pond, the club would transform the interior of the Community House for a weekend.



The engraved medal at left was awarded to Arthur Nelson for the best collection of vegetables in 1923.

Flossmoor's Longest Tradition: The Fourth of July "Junior Parade"

In 1931, the newly-formed American Legion Flossmoor Post 625 joined forces with a younger generation to establish the "Junior Parade" as an Independence Day tradition. According to legend it was Post Commander Warren Peasley's daughter Nina and her friend Laura Vanderwalker who conceived of the idea. The junior parade is a unique tradition that continues to this day, making it Flossmoor's longest-lasting tradition. In a junior parade, the community's children comprise the bulk of the parade. Flossmoor's youth decorated bicycles, wagons, scooters or other wheeled devices in patriotic designs and colors. At the end of the parade, a ceremony would take place on the traffic circle, including a 21-gun salute. Prizes would be awarded for the best decorated bicycle or "mini-float." After several years, the Flossmoor Fire Department took over sponsorship of the parade from the American Legion and now Fire Department vehicles lead the procession east on Flossmoor Road and then north through downtown.

When the Junior Parade began, it was just one part of a day-long Independence Day celebration for the village. Each year Independence Day began at 8 AM with the village's emergency siren—then located on top of the water tower on Sterling—sounding an alarm that signified it was time for each homeowner to raise their flag in unison. After that came the junior parade at 9 AM. In the mid-morning, the children would have a track meet at Leavitt Avenue School's athletic fields. A picnic lunch would be served in a grove of trees located at Western Avenue and Vollmer Road (now part of Olympia Fields' Graymoor subdivision). At 2 PM there would be a horseshoe tournament, and at 3 PM a baseball game. Finally, at 9 PM, the village would join again once more for a fireworks show. As the years went on, each of these ancillary activities was discontinued, leaving just the junior parade as an original surviving 4th of July tradition for Flossmoor.



A float from the 1935 parade representing nursery rhyme "There was an old woman who lived in a shoe."



Three well-costumed boys (and several wagons and bicycles behind them) in the 1966 parade.



The modern version of the parade travels down Flossmoor Road.

Current Summer Traditions

Each June the village celebrates Pride Month, an opportunity to recognize and highlight LGBTQ culture both locally and nationally. Although it is hosted in Homewood's Irwin Park, the **Homewood-Flossmoor Pride Fest** is co-sponsored by the village of Flossmoor and partially evolved from earlier pride parties held in Flossmoor. After joining forces with the village of Homewood and a host of local corporate sponsors, Pride Fest has been able to offer more activities and live music and has become one of the largest Pride events in the south suburbs.



Part of the crowd at the 2024 H-F Pride Fest in Homewood's Irwin Park. Photo courtesy of the H-F Chronicle.

In 2021 Flossmoor began hosting the **Homewood-Flossmoor Juneteenth Festival** on the campus of H-F High School. Organized by local youth-oriented non-profit You Matter 2 and their CEO and co-founder Destiny Watson, the festival is now co-sponsored by the village, school, and corporate benefactors. Juneteenth, which became a national holiday in that same year, marks the day (June 19th, 1865) when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas to free the final enslaved African-Americans—marking the end of slavery in America. Initially a celebration predominantly observed by southern African-Americans, the observance of Juneteenth spread throughout the nation in the ensuing decades. In its first year, the H-F Juneteenth Festival had over 2000 attendees, featured 83 black-owned businesses, and 15 entertainers. The festival has also added a morning parade through downtown Flossmoor.



A group of singers takes the stage at the 2024 H-F Juneteenth Festival. Photo courtesy of the H-F Chronicle.



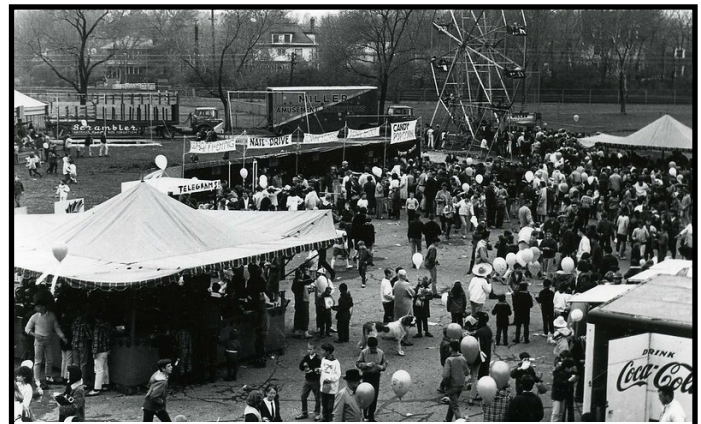
The Juneteenth Parade heads down Flossmoor Road. Photo courtesy of the H-F Chronicle.



Back-to-School Events

Flossmoor has a long tradition of sending the local schoolkids back to school with a celebration, although the details and format have varied over the decades. In 1953 the School District 161 PTA held their first Family Fun Fair, a fundraiser born out of a previous smaller event called the Hickory Stick Frolics. The Fun Fair, originally held in early October, was later moved to mid-September, shortly after the start of the school year. The Fun Fair grew into a carnival that attracted from 4000—6000 attendees from Flossmoor and other communities. At various points it was held at Western Avenue Elementary or Parker Junior High. The Fun Fair was so successful that for most of its existence it would be the PTA’s only fundraiser for the year. Proceeds would support sports, extracurriculars, and classroom activities at the schools.

Today the schools, village, park district and library collaborate on a “Back to School Bash” usually hosted late in August. This event at Flossmoor Park features food, games and giveaways. For many years a movie would be shown on a large screen after dark.



Family Fun Fair, circa 1966, with food and game booths in foreground and carnival rides in background.



The “Nail Drive” at the 1966 fair, a booth where children could hammer nails into boards for fun.

At right, SD 161 superintendent Dr. Dana Smith hands out Italian Ice at the 2024 Back to School Bash. Photo courtesy of the Village of Flossmoor Instagram page.



The Hidden Gem Half-Marathon

In the fall of 2019, a new tradition came to Flossmoor thanks to a citizens' group called Flossmoor's Future. According to group leader Tom Dobrez, Flossmoor's Future had been brainstorming potential ways to increase Flossmoor's exposure across the broader region as an ideal place to live, work, and play in Chicago's south suburbs. "We wanted to present Flossmoor in a positive light—get people to come here and look at it. Let people see the schools, the parks, and the homes," Dobrez said of the brainstorming meeting. It was group member Betsy Cutrara who suggested a half-marathon, and Dobrez took a drive right after to map out a 13.1 mile course that could reach into as many Flossmoor neighborhoods as possible.

Since the first Hidden Gem Half-Marathon— which featured 600 runners from 17 states—the race has grown to include over 1200 runners from 25 states and multiple foreign nations. The race, held the first Saturday after Labor Day each year, is perfectly timed for runners gearing up for the Chicago Marathon in mid-October. The Gem's popularity and success has led to it being "Race of the Year" by the Chicago Area Runners Association twice in a row. In 2024, the organizers added a party after the race called "Kegs and Eggs" offering food and beer to attendees.

The half-marathon has impacted more than just the runners. Each year hundreds of Flossmoor residents volunteer at comfort stations alongside the course route to offer water, Gatorade or even doughnuts to the runners. Some neighborhoods have developed elaborate themes for cheer squads to lift the spirits of the participants. The joint planning that goes into these displays has brought neighbors together in ways that even surprised the race organizers. "Community participation has blown us away," said Dobrez. "We call it the 'gem effect' and it has been incredibly rewarding to us."

Another example of the "gem effect" occurred in October of 2022 in the form of "Plant the Gem," a one-day event where community volunteers planted over 300 trees along the half-marathon's route. Plant the Gem was financed by \$30,000 in federal grant money awarded by the Chicago Region Trees Initiative and The Morton Arboretum and the success of the race was a determining factor in the award. The trees chosen were from a wide variety of native species and in the years to come should develop into a dense canopy to shade the course for future Gem runners.



Runners crossing the starting line of the 2024 Hidden Gem. Photo courtesy of the H-F Chronicle.



Part of a "Super Mario Brothers" themed cheering group in Heather Hill in 2024. Photo courtesy of the H-F Chronicle.

Halloween Haunts in Flossmoor Over The Years

In 1944 the Flossmoor Recreation Association and the Flossmoor Fire Department began co-sponsoring a Halloween party in Flossmoor Park that included a bonfire and apples and cider as refreshments. The party began at 7:30 which offered children ample time to trick or treat beforehand. The Fire Department would build a large bonfire—about 12 feet in diameter—and often threw firecrackers into the fire to liven up the event. Children would parade around the bonfire and prizes were given to the best costumed boys and girls.

In a handwritten reminiscence of Flossmoor, Jane Monro Peddicord recalls one particularly interesting year at the Halloween bonfire. In either the late 1950s or early 1960s, the Fire Department had recently acquired a flame and heat-retardant suit as well as an airpack breathing apparatus. Jane's husband Lee Peddicord, a lieutenant with the department, devised a unique method of demonstrating the effectiveness of the new suit for the village. Before anyone arrived to the park, Lee donned the suit and hid in the woodpile. After the fire was lit the children began their parade around the bonfire. Eventually the fire became so hot that Lee could no longer remain concealed. He leapt out of the bonfire and scared the crowd so severely that people were sent running and screaming. Although it provided a great Halloween spook, many attendees were angered and the stunt was never done again in Flossmoor.

The bonfire and party remained a Flossmoor tradition for around twenty-five years. However, in the late 1960s teenagers in the crowd began to get a little rowdy and post-bonfire activities would include things like egging houses or throwing toilet paper into trees. Once that started happening, the Fire Department cancelled the event. Eventually the department started sponsoring an afternoon party at Parker Junior High strictly for younger kids. That tradition lasted until 2019.

Today, most Halloweens in Flossmoor are marked strictly by trick or treating and private parties. However, since 2018 an annual attraction has haunted locals and visitors alike. The Devil's Playground is a home-based haunted yard display located on Western Avenue just north of Western Avenue Elementary. Keith Janowski, the homeowner, had originally started Devil's Playground in Oak Lawn in 2005. His partner, Renee Basick, joined him in the haunts in 2015. In 2017 they relocated to their new home in Flossmoor. Each year the Devil's Playground is open from mid-October to the night of Halloween itself and attracts hundreds of attendees out for a good scare. The attraction is entirely free, and any donations made by visitors goes to benefit the Haunters Against Hate non-profit organization.



*Part of the spooky sights on display at The Devil's Playground.
Photo from their website.*

Current Fall Traditions

Each year, the village of Flossmoor and the Flossmoor Public Library partner on a **Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration**. Hispanic Heritage Month was designated by the federal government in 1988 as September 15th—October 15th. The dates were chosen because the independence days celebrated by Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua all happen to fall within this one-month span. For the past several years, Flossmoor has celebrated with an early evening performance by a mariachi band between the library and the traffic circle. Attendees bring folding chairs, sit on the grass or spend the event on their feet dancing. After the show ends many attendees extend their evening by enjoying dinner in downtown Flossmoor.

As part of Flossmoor's centennial celebration in 2024, the village inaugurated a new fall festival called **Oaktoberfest**. The festival, which took place on the final Saturday of September, is expected to return and become an annual event. Oaktoberfest has two separate components. The first part, at Flossmoor Park, has educational booths, arts and crafts, and other activities related to trees, plants, and other environmental topics—with several geared specifically for children. To encourage tree growth in the community, the Flossmoor Green Commission gave away 100 young oak trees for planting. Oaktoberfest's second part happened a few hours later at Metra's south parking lot. From 4 to 9 PM revelers gathered inside a party tent for live music, food and beverages. Two bands and a DJ performed while food was served from vendors such as The Bistro on Sterling, Dunning's Gourmet Market & Deli and Flossmoor Station Restaurant & Brewery.



Mariachi Tradicional Juvenil entertains the crowd at the 2024 celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. Photo courtesy of H-F Chronicle.



A resident browses native plants for sale at Homewood Science Center's Oaktoberfest booth. Photo courtesy of the Village of Flossmoor Facebook page.



At right: Nighttime entertainment in the Oaktoberfest Party Tent. Photo courtesy of the Village of Flossmoor's Facebook page.



Winter

Ice Skating in the Park

In the early days Flossmoor had two separate and smaller park districts, one serving the area east of Western Avenue and the other serving the area west. Neither had much of a budget, and no official parks existed in the village. In July 1944 the two districts merged to form the Flossmoor Park District. The first accomplishment of the new district was the acquisition of the land north of Flossmoor Road and just east of the train tracks which became Flossmoor Park.

In 1946 Flossmoor Park began to offer residents year-round activities when the 100 by 300 foot skating rink and accompanying warming house were built at the south end of the park. The rink soon became a beloved amenity for the village, offering generations of youth and adults the opportunity to practice their skating—or play a pick-up hockey game— free of charge.

The rink was open day or night thanks to floodlights installed by the park district. For many years, overhead speakers would pipe music out over the rink. When skaters became too cold, they could go into the warming house and sit in front of the fireplace. For several years the skating rink and warming house were the site of the “Winter Carnival,” a celebration in mid-January offering skating, hot chocolate, and other activities. Competitive “ice skating derbies” would also often be held.

Of course, the skating rink still exists today and the transition from bare patch of grass to a rink with lining and walls is a sure sign of winter’s impending approach in Flossmoor. However, due perhaps to a recent string of milder winters or a wider range of entertainment options, its popularity and usage is not as prevalent as it was in the 1940s and 1950s.



A crowd of young skaters enjoying the pond in 1947. At the edges of the pond are hockey nets waiting for the next pick-up game.



Alice Wiley, age 12, warms up in front of the fire inside the warming house in 1947.

The Flossmoor “Crazy Lights”

Like several great traditions, the Flossmoor “Crazy Lights” phenomenon was started by a single household. Since 1999, when Dartmouth Road homeowner Tyler Thompson first put up his unique Christmas decorations, the Crazy Light trend has grown organically from house to house, block to block, and neighborhood to neighborhood.

Crazy lights involve taking a string of Christmas lights—almost always monochromatically white—and launching them from the ground into the tallest branches of a tree. When finished, the lights resemble an upside down letter V. Thompson first saw the design on a trip to Kansas City, and incorporated them into his own Christmas decorations. At first, he was alone, but eventually his neighbors on Dartmouth began to follow suit. Like any community tradition, the activity brought neighbors closer together. In a 2023 interview with *The Daily Southtown’s* Paul Eisenberg, Thompson commented “... it became a street event...One of those Saturdays we’d just have a huge lunch and the whole street would come down, whether they were helping or not.”

Thompson’s method of hanging the crazy lights was to use two baseballs bolted together with strings attached. Some later adoptees of the crazy lights—perhaps tired of lobbing baseballs into the treetops— started using an air cannon powered by a portable compressor that shoots weighted plugs with the strings attached.

Once Dartmouth became fully illuminated with crazy lights, the usually quiet dead-end street became a drive-through attraction that drew people from all over Flossmoor and surrounding communities. Thompson, a member of Flossmoor Community Church, then introduced the concept to the church’s seasonal decorations. After that, several Flossmoor Park homeowners began to incorporate crazy lights into their decorations. The concept continues to spread throughout the village and shows no signs of stopping.



The “original” home of the Flossmoor Crazy Lights, Dartmouth Road south of Flossmoor Road. Photo by Paul Eisenberg/Southtown Star.



The Flossmoor Community Church introduced the crazy lights to the Flossmoor Park neighborhood, northwest of Dartmouth Road. Photo courtesy of FCC’s Facebook page.

The Twelfth Night Party: An Unusual Page from Flossmoor History

Not every tradition is sponsored by an organization or government and not every tradition incorporates the entirety of a village. Block parties may bring together only a dozen or so families; other gatherings may be even more exclusive. However, these small annual gatherings can be as important for the attendees as any large-scale event. Such is the case for Flossmoor's obscure, and unusual, Twelfth Night party.

Twelfth Night, also known as Epiphany, is observed in Christian tradition twelve days after Christmas—January 6th. For over a quarter century, Flossmoor had a Twelfth Night party that took place not in a church but in the home of Franklin and Emma Barber on Brassie Avenue. The first party took place in January 1927. In 1953, the Barbers' party was the focus of an article in the local Star newspaper, where the party's customs were described.

The Barbers would host their party on the closest Sunday to January 6th. The party started with the "burning of Christmas greens." According to tradition, bad luck would strike a family if all greens were not out of the house by Epiphany. So, each attendee would bring their wreaths or drag their trees to the Barbers' home where they would burn them one by one in the fireplace. As each attendee burned their greens they would recite a poem that they had written for the occasion.

Following the burning of the greens, an evening of games and other merriment would be planned by the current "Lord of Misrule" for the party. The Lord of Misrule would have been selected at the previous year's party through a special process. A "bean cake" would be made by the host with a single bean embedded within. The guest who received the piece of cake with the bean in it would then be next year's Lord of Misrule, giving them a full year to plan. The Lord of Misrule's agenda for the evening would vary; one year a mock battle was planned with cardboard castles. Combat was done by lobbing confetti-filled eggs.

The revelers were so fond of the Barbers' annual tradition that even attendees who moved out of state over the years would return to Flossmoor for the party. One year during World War II, the Barbers announced that they wouldn't be hosting a Twelfth Night Party. As the date grew closer, Mrs. Barber began to regret the decision and felt melancholy that the party would not be happening. To her delight, on the appropriate evening the Barbers received a knock at their door and all their usual partygoers were waiting outside, ready for another night of fun.

It is unknown when the Barbers' annual tradition ended. They lived in Flossmoor up until their deaths in the mid-1970s.



TWELFTH NIGHT.

Most of the customs the Barbers observed were centuries old. In this image from 1794, a bean cake is being served to partygoers.

Current Winter Traditions

For several years, Flossmoor offered a **Winterfest** in downtown Flossmoor on the first Saturday of December. This all-day festival was first sponsored by the Flossmoor Downtown Business Association in an effort to generate shopping revenue and later morphed into a more family-focused event co-sponsored by the village, the library, the park district and the fire department. Traditions included a visit from Santa, arts and crafts in the library, and the lighting of the village Christmas Tree and Menorah. While Winterfest is no longer an official event, there are still some remnants remaining. One is **Janet Gustafson's Gingerbread Village Tour**. Each year Gustafson builds dozens of gingerbread homes and invites people into her (real) home to take a look. Another annual tradition is the **Village Tree, Menorah and Kinara**, all housed in Flossmoor Park. The tree is lit on the first Saturday of December, while one candle is lit in the Menorah on each night of Hanukkah and one candle is lit in the Kinara on each night of Kwanzaa.

An even more recent holiday tradition—emerging in 2020—has been the **Holiday Lights Parade** held at dusk on the Thursday before Christmas. In this parade, police cars, fire trucks, and public works vehicles are decked out in holiday lights for a parade route leading through many Flossmoor neighborhoods.

Post-holiday, there is only a small window of time before **The Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service** takes place. Launched by the Community Relations Committee in 2015, the Day of Service aims to connect willing volunteers with non-profit organizations and community service projects in need, with the goal of honoring MLK's social justice legacy by turning his birthday from a "day off" to a "day on."

Finally, in February the village honors **Black History Month** each year, celebrating the achievements and legacy of African-Americans. Educational events are held at the library and elsewhere, and the Pan-African flag is put on display in downtown Flossmoor.



Elliot Yurman lights the last candle in the 2023 village menorah. Photo courtesy of the H-F Chronicle.



The Holiday Lights Parade winds through a Flossmoor neighborhood. Courtesy of the H-F Chronicle.



The Pan-African Flag flies over Sterling Avenue during Black History Month. Courtesy of the H-F Chronicle



Spring

The Flossmoor House Walk

Each year in late May or early June, the Flossmoor Service League hosts the annual Flossmoor House Walk. The league uses this event to raise funds for local charities and their own scholarship program. In a community rich with unique and varied residential architecture, the House Walk is always a hot ticket. Each year a selection of four or five houses is chosen for the walk. The homeowners open their doors for tour attendees to see the homes' interiors. What many House Walk attendees and homeowners may not know is they are participating in a Flossmoor tradition that goes back almost seventy years.

The Flossmoor Service League was formed in 1955 and offered their first House Walk in 1956. At various points over the decades the walk was also marketed as the "Suburban Stroll," but the concept remained the same. In the earliest decades, the walk would include a luncheon at the Flossmoor Country Club; currently attendees have the option of finishing their tour with lunch at Flossmoor Station for an additional charge.

The homes chosen for the tour always represent a variety of styles. They may include traditional colonial homes, prairie style, mid-century modern, or contemporary homes. The homes may be historic or recently built. Condos and townhomes have also been featured. The only commonality is the openness of the homeowner to sharing their decorating prowess with the general public.



The living room of the Curry family, whose home was featured in the 1992 edition of the House Walk.

Flossmoor Baseball and Softball's Opening Day Parade

Flossmoor Baseball and Softball was formed in 1959, making 2024 its 65th season of introducing the community's children to the nation's pastime. The league is an independent non-profit organization that is completely volunteer and parent-led, from t-ball coaching all the way up to a board of directors that has the responsibility for overall league management. For many Flossmoor families over the decades, playing or attending baseball games at the fields behind Western Avenue Elementary School is a summer tradition of its own. However, the season actually starts with a spring tradition—the Opening Day Parade.

Each year opening day is held on a Saturday in late April. According to longtime resident Tom Dobrez, the parade tradition goes back to the earliest days of the league. The parade route goes from Parker Junior High to the Bronco Field at Western Avenue Elementary. Teams walk the parade in uniform and also will often be carrying banners, pennants or other props. As they walk down Flossmoor Road, residents line the sidewalk to cheer them on and a panel of judges evaluates each team on their spirit. The highlight of the parade for many players is the chance to test the echo under the Flossmoor Road viaduct—where the parade suddenly get very loud!

Following the parade, a ceremony is held on the Bronco field for all the teams. The ceremony begins with the national anthem, followed by remarks from league management and the announcement of the parade's Team Spirit winners. Almost every year features remarks from a special guest local celebrity. Dobrez reports highlights of his memories being appearances by John Cangelosi, Bill "Moose" Skowron, and "Beltin'" Bill Melton—all Chicago White Sox players at various times.

After the end of the ceremony at the Bronco Field, a variety of games are scheduled on all four fields at Western. Usually games will start in the early afternoon and continue until the evening. Opening Day also means the opening of the league's concession stand, where attendees can purchase their first hot pretzel or walking taco of the season—a sure sign of summer coming around the bend.



The 2016 Pinto League White Sox carry their team banner in the parade.



Opening Day is also the time for team photographs to be taken. Pictured is the 1976 Gophers. Photo courtesy of Tom Dobrez.

Other Current Spring Traditions

The **St. Patrick's Day Parade** is a true home-grown tradition of the Flossmoor Park neighborhood dating back over 15 years which has just recently started being co-sponsored by the village. According to the history of the parade, it began in 2007 when 30 neighbors left the Levy house together and went around the block dressed in green and pulling decorated wagons or riding decorated bicycles. After serving as parade hosts from 2007—2015, the Levys handed the reins to the Stevensons, who have organized and hosted since then. Each year participation has increased and the group added a post-parade party at the community house to keep the fun times going.

Memorial Day Taps Across America is a somber affair honoring the nation's and the village's own casualties of war. Each Memorial Day the gathering is scheduled for 3 PM at the traffic circle in downtown Flossmoor, the former site of a memorial dedicated to Flossmoor residents who have died in warfare. A few short speeches are given and trumpet players play the traditional Taps song to honor the fallen. Taps Across America is a nationwide program established in 2015; there are over 10,000 known participants across the country each year. Flossmoor has participated since 2020.



Part of the 2017 Parade. Photo from the parade's Facebook group.



Taps is played in the traffic circle on Memorial Day 2023. Photo courtesy of the H-F Chronicle.

Postscript

Thank you for reading this article. A writer's hardest task is deciding what to put in and what to leave out—and guessing exactly where they are testing the reader's patience. For this article, that meant several treasured traditions were not included— perhaps one of your favorites. Absolutely no offense is intended by any exclusions.

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The “Four Seasons Tree” graphic used on the title page (and adapted for section headings) is courtesy of www.istockphoto.com

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