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Magna, West Jordan groups hope floats rise to top

Different designs: One features a pioneer family, the other a Loch Ness monster

Floats take time, creativity

By Kathryn Jones
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While most enjoy the Days of '47 Parade from their cozy lounge chairs at home, some will ride out the occasion - on a real float in front of thousands of people.

It's an experience few involved with the floats will soon forget.

"I feel like I've spent 1,000 hours myself, but it's been a fun ride," said Sherri Cottom, chairman of the LDS Magna Central Stake float that took top honors at the July Fourth parade in Magna and also will take part in the Days of '47.

The float's theme, "Dreams of a Cleaner Tomorrow," depicts the experience of a pioneer woman who leaves her wash and returns to find her children romping about in the wash tub and the family cat drenched.

Volunteer Sarah Anderson toiled tirelessly to sculpt the children's faces. Members of the LDS stake also created a clothesline, bubbles made from chicken wire, petal paper and ornament balls and a tail-wagging dog.

"We put the float in the Magna parade on purpose," Cottom said. "We wanted all the glitches worked out."

Modern Display, a store in Salt Lake City, assisted with the float.

"We had not a clue how to build a float. Every step of the way Modern Display helped," Cottom said.

During the float's debut in Magna, Cottom added, the head of one of the sculpted children quit moving - a screw had fallen out - and the bird on the clothesline started "drooping and heading south."

Cottom says few seemed to notice the problem.

"People told us we had a fun float," she said.

In the West Jordan East Stake, co-chairs Drew and Heather Flockhart got a nudge from Design Werks to pick a more exciting theme for their parade float.

The firm came up "with a design for us to look at [of] a Loch Ness monster," Heather Flockhart said.

"It wasn't anything like we expected," Drew Flockhart added. "We were worried that because of our [Scottish] accents, . . . others might feel that we had planned" it.

Both are now glad they changed their original float plan of pioneers, handcarts and temples for a slightly more daring rendition. The float's new theme: "Pioneer Dreams - Loch Ness to Happy Ness."

The West Jordan float sports a hefty Loch Ness monster blowing a plaid bagpipe. Designed by Paul Henrie, this monster sports a head that can rotate 90 degrees. Styrofoam children peer from lofty castles on the float. Youth clad in their pioneer best will walk near the float during the parade.

"You'd think that the huge pieces [on the float] are the most important, but it's the detail that makes it look good and takes the most time," Heather Flockhart said.

"You've got to consider the weight and durability factor," Drew Flockhart added. "Is it going to last? It's not unusual to see parts of the float getting blown off and going down Main Street."

"One of the troubles was the sun," said Heather Flockhart, stating that their group has no indoor place to store the float. Currently, the float is being stored under tarps protecting it from the rain as well.

All those involved in the construction of the Magna and West Jordan floats were grateful for the help they received from their respective groups.

"It's incredible how much individuals will respond and support," Drew Flockhart said.



At right, Scott Huish staples a hat to the monster. (Photos courtesy of Drew Flockhart)



The West Jordan Utah East Stake float, above, features a Loch Ness monster and the theme, Pioneer Dreams - Loch Ness to Happy Ness." (Photos courtesy of Drew Flockhart)