

# Parade with a side of commentary

Duo's banter delights audience

By KATHY ANEY  
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Miller. Melton.  
Melton. Miller.

The surnames of Bob Miller and Tom Melton are interchangeable on Dress-Up Parade day. The duo uncorks a river of repartee that flows as they provide running commentary for parade spectators.

Miller and Melton started talking about 10 a.m. Saturday from their broadcasting platform in front of the Hamley Steakhouse and kept up the unbroken banter for about an hour as the 89-entry parade wended its way east up Dorion, west on Court and past their booth.

The parade began with the Kyle Burnside Memorial Run. Runners blasted off the line to the boom of a cannon and ran the one-and-a-half-mile route. Miller and Melton evaluated running styles and costumes as the runners passed the broadcast booth. Costumes ranged from Captain America, Darth Vader and a chicken to Superman and a sumo wrestler.

In the lull between the runners and the next group — a group of Oregon Army National Guardsmen and a Bradley Fighting Vehicle — they waxed poetic about the Dress-Up Parade.

"This the third largest parade in the state of Oregon," Miller said. "This is a parade for anyone who ever wanted to be in a parade."

The two men can't remember how many years they have provided commentary for the Dress-Up Parade.

"I don't know ... we just show up," Melton said. "At least 20."

The two obviously have chemistry, but they like each other in the way of Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau in "Grumpy Old Men." They sling well-timed insults at one another with finesse.

"We don't get along that well," Melton said. "One day a year we can stand each other."

"It's like a marriage," Miller agreed.

"Except we're divorced for 364 days a year," Melton said.

Well, 363 days. The friends also commentate during Friday's Westward Ho! Parade.

Saturday morning, the two men met at the microphones about 45 minutes before the parade start and studied a cheat sheet of facts about each politician, business, band, club or royal court that would pass by.

The commentators keep their silver tongues oiled with tiny sips of strong Hamley coffee (Melton) or pure water (Miller). They restrain the urge to drink more because there are no bathroom breaks. Along with the cheat sheet and the beverages, they also keep an umbrella handy.

"When the Happy Canyon guys come by, they unload 10 pounds of candy at us," Melton said. "The kids gather around us. This year, we brought an umbrella."

They admitted the massive volley of Tootsie Rolls is partly their fault.

"We antagonize them by calling them a bunch of weeny arms," Miller said.

Miller said he treasures this annual gig that he said he originally got because he knew about horses. "I knew the difference between a paint and a pinto, a Percheron, a Clydesdale and a Belgian," he said.

The men seek to keep their flow of banter politically correct.

"It's got to be politically correct," Melton said. "There's no reason during this great event to talk politics."

The final entry passed about an hour after Miller and Melton had picked up their microphones. They signed off with the phrase every Pendletonian knows, "Let'er Buck" and the street went quiet. The Dress-Up Parade had officially ended.

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Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
Bob Miller and Tom Melton keep up a running banter during Saturday's Dress-Up Parade in Pendleton.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
Happy Canyon Princess Appollonia Saenz.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
A horse of many colors walked the route of Saturday's Dress-Up Parade in Pendleton.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
Pendleton High School's Rhythmic Mode performs during the Dress-Up Parade on Saturday in downtown Pendleton.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
A member of the Pendleton Round-Up Mounted Band plays during the parade.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
A roller skater passes out Hal's Hamburgers menus during the parade.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
A dog walks with the Pendleton Pupcakes group during the parade.

More photos online

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