



In tribute to Sammy Howard, his cause

Viewpoint

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I was very glad to read in Monday's editorial page Bruce Brown's letter acknowledging the fact that in spite of the rain, the parade raised more than \$3,600 for the Jimmy Fund.

It pleased me even more that he made mention that the Jimmy Fund was started in 1948 by one of our own local heroes, Sammy Howard.

I was only 6 years old when Sammy started the first Jimmy Fund Parade.

I can still remember it like it was yesterday, though it was 60 years ago.

The parade at that time marched straight down State Street (before it became one-way) past Middle Street where I grew up as a child and around Market Square to its final destination.

The parade back then was a great extravaganza that to this day has never been equaled.

Bands from all over the country came to participate, as well as many military personnel, dignitaries, baseball players and many other contributors too many to mention.

Sammy was a great baseball fan who loved the game and was loyal fan of the Boston Braves until the team was sold in 1953 to Milwaukee and also the Boston Red Sox.

Sammy, combining his love for baseball and kids, devoted unselfishly his time to an event he believed could raise money for a disease that was attacking something he loved fondly (children).

It's amazing that a man who never married and had children of his own could foster a love for them so great that he devoted most of his life to their cause.

That speaks for itself of the compassion and integrity of this great individual.

He made friends with many people including professional baseball players, and using his contacts he influenced them into devoting a lot of their spare time (that continues to this day) to join him in his cause.

Because of Sammy, the Boston Red Sox have been associated with the Jimmy Fund and has been supporting that charity for many years.

History denotes all the success that The Jimmy Fund has accomplished over the years. So many great things have been done in the fight against cancer in children and I would like to feel a lot of it was because of the great idea that Sammy Howard had back in 1948.

Over the years many parades have been held in Newburyport where young children (Little League Teams, Pioneer Leagues, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Brownies and Girl Scouts to mention a few) march holding the blankets to collect the many coins that the spectators throw in for the ongoing battle against cancer in children.

Over the years many changes has been made in the annual parade, in its performance and appearance.

The thing that hasn't been changed, however, is the blankets held by these kids and the pride and smiles on their faces knowing they are doing something to help others less fortunate than themselves.

I would like to think this is a great tribute to Sammy Howard and all he worked hard for.

Sammy would be proud of these kids and I'm sure if he could he would be marching beside them as he did for many years, flashing that great smile that he always exhibited.

Let this tribute never stop.

Let us hope that the blankets will never be eliminated from future parades and that the Jimmy Fund will remain a big part of the annual parade.

Let it be a living memorial to the great Sammy Howard and all his accomplishments over the years.

I would however like to make a suggestion and hope the people of Newburyport rise to the challenge.

Somehow or other the name of the parade changed its name from the Jimmy Fund Parade to its present name, the Yankee Homecoming Parade.

I would like to suggest that next year's parade be named "The Sammy Howard Memorial Jimmy Fund Parade."

A very small token of our appreciation to a man who is no longer with us except in our hearts and in our minds.

God bless you, Sammy Howard, may your hope of a cure for the cancer in children become a reality someday.

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