

# St. Patrick's Day parade in A.C. attracts people of Irish descent

VINCENT JACKSON Staff Writer

ATLANTIC CITY — Besides people who adopt an Irish identity for the day, the St. Patrick's Day parade Saturday also holds a special appeal for South Jersey residents of Irish descent.

Sharon Rose Masino, of Galloway Township, is one-quarter Irish. Her mother was Italian, and her father was half Irish and half German, but Masino said her father took more pride in and represented his Irish roots more.

“My dad lived and died being an Irishman,” said Masino, 57, whose father died Sept. 11, 2012.

Masino attended the St. Patrick's Day parade to honor her father's heritage.

“I miss him every day,” Masino said.

The resort's St. Patrick's Day parade started at 1 p.m. just north of Garden Pier and ended hours later at Albany Avenue and the Boardwalk.

The parade was held with the sun shining and temperatures in the 40s — but with a breeze coming off the ocean blowing as hard as 10 mph, it felt colder outside than it looked.

Keli Care, 44, of Northfield, has been to the parade about 30 times in her life. Care made it to the parade again this year even though her parents, Charles and Terrie Fahy, of Linwood, did not.

Care said her family came to America during the 1860s and served during the Civil War.

Care has three sons, ages 10, 7 and 6. Along with telling them stories, she said, bringing them to the St. Patrick's Day parade is part of her effort to keep her family's Irish heritage alive in her children.

The resort's parade was held a week before the official celebration of St. Patrick's Day on March 17.

Besides attending the parade, Care said, her family gathers on St. Patrick's Day and listens to Irish music with her father's brother, John Fahy, of Marmora, and his wife, Joann, and her father's sister, Kathie Fahy, of Northfield. The extended Fahy family was with Care at the parade.

Many people were Irish for at least one day on the Boardwalk. The new Biergarten on the Boardwalk at California Avenue and Chickie's and Pete's Crabhouse and Sports Bar on the Boardwalk were both playing Irish music.

At the Everything 99 cents store, St. Patrick's Day hats, bow ties and necklaces were selling for — you guessed it — 99 cents.

Meg Steeb, 52, of Sweetwater, Mullica Township, said her parents were both half Irish.

Steeb's great-grandmother, Catherine Berkery, came to this country with her husband, Patrick, in the early 1900s through Ellis Island.

“We try to give our children Irish names. We celebrate St. Patrick's Day,” Steeb said. “I love bagpipes.”

Steeb said she has been able to keep the tradition going of celebrating St. Patrick's Day and attending the parade with her son, Jeff Steeb, 22.

Jeff Steeb is a senior and a lineman on the Villanova University football team, but Steeb said he loves coming to the parade.

Steeb also played a role in introducing the parade to the youngest member and next generation of the family, Camryn Grace, who is her great-niece and was attending the parade for the first time Saturday, as she was born on Thanksgiving.