

Press Release

Greenbelt Line Dry Team wins Three Parade Awards

Greenbelt Sun-Dried Garmenture Society Drill Team wins *People's Choice*, *3rd in Community*, and *Most Humorous* categories in 2009 Greenbelt Labor Day Parade

Greenbelt MD, 7 September 2009: The all-volunteer Greenbelt Sun-Dried Garmenture Society Drill Team (GSD²T) won three awards at the 2009 Labor Day Festival, including the *People's Choice Award*, in support of their message that residents consider using clotheslines to dry their clothes in the interest of the environment and personal health. They were awarded *Most Humorous* and placed 3rd in *Best Community* entry.

Video and high-resolution photos of the team, as well as an electronic copy of this press release, will be available on their website: <http://spril.com/LineDry>

Team History

The team built on its success in last year's Labor Day Parade as the Greenbelt Reel Lawnmower Society Precision Drill Team (GRLSPDT). This year, an eleven-member marching team bore tall poles strung with clotheslines festooned with bright garments. Throughout the parade, they presented maneuvers choreographed to the beat of a drum.

This year's theme was conceived by team lyricist Jim Cohen, a Greenbelt resident who sought to increase awareness of the simple clothesline. "Many people just throw their clothes into a tumble dryer without thinking about the options," Cohen said. "Our routine is meant to remind everyone that clotheslines and drying racks are less expensive and more environmentally conscious than a gas- or electric-powered tumble dryer—and are better for your clothes too. Our hope is that drawing attention to these simple old ideas in a light-hearted manner will encourage our community to think about their laundry."

For immediate release

The Society has been practicing for over one week. Choreographer Karen Wallace said, "It was fabulous to plan maneuvers for tall poles bearing such brightly colored garments, from a rainbow tie-dyed t-shirt to a sexy red thong."

Team members in the parade marched in step down Crescent Road, with call-and-response chants. They performed their full routine at two intersections and in front of judges at the reviewing stand.

Laundry in Greenbelt History

The Society reminds residents that Greenbelt has made considerable progress in laundry freedom. When the first citizens moved into the federally-planned community in the 1930s, they received the *Greenbelt Manual*, which included detailed restrictions on laundry—most notably the prohibition of hanging clothes Saturday afternoon, all day Sunday, and weekdays after 4pm.¹ Greenbelt's first public employee, George Panagoulis, was a police officer and said "one of our biggest responsibilities was making sure all the clotheslines in town were cleared."²

In this year's parade, the thongs and boxers were hoisted for more than their bright colors—they also represent a specific turning point in Greenbelt's laundry history. In 1937, the city received national attention when the Associated Press distributed "Model Life Not So Simple," describing a letter from resident Sally Rand in the *Cooperator* (forerunner of the *Greenbelt News Review*).³ Ms. Rand wrote, "I don't know what to do about my brazen out-door clothesline; it is so public out there in the great open spaces. I've always dried my little tid-bits of intimate apparel on the towel rack in the bathroom; but this public display makes me feel as if I were doing a strip-tease act for the benefit of all the town men of Greenbelt." In the subsequent public debate, City Manager Roy Braden recommended that launderers "get over their commendable shyness."⁴

Since then, the community has repealed its laundry laws to become a model of clothesline rights. But an attempt this year by Maryland delegate Galen Clagett (D-3A) to give all Marylanders this freedom—by prohibiting homeowners associations from fining clothesline users—was unsuccessful.^{5,6}

¹ Greenbelt Laundry Rules and Regulations, <http://otal.umd.edu/~vg/amst205.S97/vj08/project5grr.html>

² Oral Histories of the City of Greenbelt, <http://otal.umd.edu/~vg/community/orals.html>

³ *The St. Petersburg Florida Independent*, November 25, 1937, "Flashes of Life" page 5.

⁴ "Greenbelt Wives Blush and Hide 'Til Undies on the Line are Dried," *Washington Herald*, November 26, 1937

⁵ "Hang it out to dry: HOAs would have to allow clotheslines," *Frederick News Post*, January 29, 2009, <http://www.wtop.com/?sid=1587740&nid=25>

⁶ "Clotheslines a hang-up for some communities," *USA Today*, September 7, 2009 http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2009-09-07-clotheslines_N.htm

There is a documentary to be released nationwide in 2010, “Drying for Freedom: A Film about Clotheslines.”⁷

The Society appreciates the attention it has been able to draw to clotheslines. US House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, also in the parade, expressed a clear understanding of the link between the drill team’s work and his leadership in Congress on climate change legislation. Two challengers for the Greenbelt City Council race—Emmett Jordan and Che Sayles—provided assurance that they would support right-to-dry policies if elected.

Clotheslines

Team members use both clotheslines and powered dryers, recognizing that machines do a better job sometimes—like rainy days. But while many Americans have gotten used to gas and electric dryers, the Society asks people to reconsider the devices—which consume a great deal of energy creating an artificially heated wind that can often be provided for free by mother nature. Aside from the environmental considerations, mechanical dryers slowly degrade garments over time. Every time you empty your lint filter, you’re witnessing the gradual destruction of your clothing as fabric comes apart from the mechanized abuse. Clothes, bedding, and towels last longer when they dry on a clothesline⁸, and you wouldn’t need to use fabric softeners with perfume attempting to replicate the pleasant smell of line-dried textiles.

Electric clothes dryers use from 1,800 to 5,000 watts—second only to water heaters among common household appliances.⁹ There are no clothes dryers certified for the federal Energy Star program, because all dryers are similarly inefficient.¹⁰

The Sun-Dried Garmenture Society encourages everyone to consider clotheslines and drying racks.
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⁷ <http://www.dryingforfreedom.com/>

⁸ Energy Star Best Practices,

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=clotheswash.clothes_washers_performance_tips

⁹ Estimating Appliance and Home Electronic Energy Use,

http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/appliances/index.cfm/mytopic=10040

¹⁰ Energy Star Best Practices,

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=clotheswash.clothes_washers_performance_tips