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Millennium focus of parade

BY EMILY PYEATT
Staff writer

With all the millennium brouhaha, one may be overwhelmed by the fiasco being caused by the new year. Cities around America are book-

ing concerts and events to celebrate the holiday and move into the new year with a bang.

Lincoln is no different.

This year's annual Star City Parade bears the theme "Millennium of Stars" and is "the only officially city-sponsored millennium event,"

said parade representative Suzi Shugert.

A community tradition, the Star City Parade offers highlights and attractions of the past combined with new citywide activities.

The parade will follow its traditional route through the downtown area, including a trek down O Street through the crowds.

"Depending on the weather, we are expecting a crowd between 40,000 and 65,000," Shugert said.

The spectators can expect 68 entries, including 10 floats and five gigantic balloons.

"Two of the balloons are the Statue of Liberty and a Jack in the Box, both over 60 feet tall," Shugert said.

Other balloons include a Mr. Potato Head, a space shuttle and the Underdog cartoon character.

"Underdog was a cult-type cartoon for those of us over 40," Shugert said.

The balloons are sure to capture attention, but it's the floats that reflect the millennium theme of the parade.

One interpretation of the "Millennium of Stars" theme led to the creation of a Hollywood-style float of Mann's Chinese Theater, complete with limos.

Another attraction is the Harley Davidson's "Ride to the Stars" float. The Harley float includes a real bike and a huge wizard with a rotating head. Thirteen bikers dressed in futuristic satin clothes accompany the float, Shugert said.

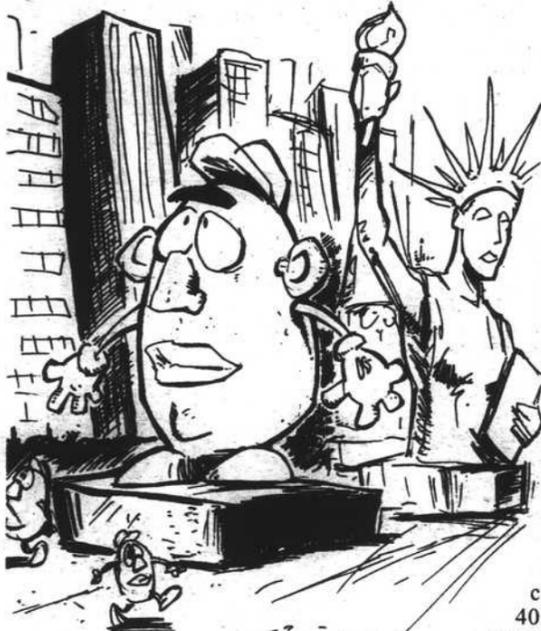
The parade's newest attraction is the Santa float. It consists of two parts more than 60 feet long and 13 feet high.

The parade will also feature entries honoring Nebraska cities. Columbus will be honored by a float, a vintage car with the city's dignitaries and a 250-member community band consisting of three high school bands.

Events accompanying the parade include the traditional lighting of the community Christmas tree at the Cornhusker hotel. Mayor Don Wesley is expected to speak at the Cornhusker, and awards and refreshments will follow.

Other activities include the Big Apple Circus sponsored by the Lied Center.

So Lincoln, have no fear, your early millennium celebration is here.



MATT HANEY/DN



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