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Contact:

Gary M. Jones - Media Relations Manager

913-579-1953 (cell) 913-652-0849 (home)

[garymjones@aol.com](mailto:garymjones@aol.com)

## **Martin City Celebrates Another Big St. Patrick's Day Parade**

The late-winter chill didn't diminish the thrill for the thousands of people taking part in Martin City's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 14. Parade goers painted the town green and filled it with Irish spirit during the main event and in the hours preceding and following it when IRISHPALOOZA (meaning an Irish extravaganza) hosted a variety of family-friendly games, contests, musical performances and other interactive experiences.

As the parade has grown exponentially in recent years, it still retains its small-town charm and the well-earned moniker "The biggest little fun parade in Kansas City."

"We couldn't be happier with how things went today, though a little sun and ten more degrees would have made for perfection," said Mary Nestel, parade director. "More than 20,000 people were in Martin City today and many of them came early to enjoy the IRISHPALOOZA festivities. The energy and enthusiasm of the crowd was amazing and we continue to see more participation in the full day of fun things surrounding the parade."

Nstel went on to say that an increasing number of merchants in Martin City and beyond are supporting the parade.

"It's all about the community and supporting good causes like the Ozanam Home," she said. "With so many people coming to Martin City and many of them discovering for the first time what a great place it is, it's a real incentive for area merchants to get involved. We're just grateful to be a part of this wonderful experience."

### **And The Winners Are....**

Featured at IRISHPALOOZA was the Young Prince & Princess contest for the little ones age two to seven and the Junior Irish Idol karaoke competition for youngsters age eight to 17. Maximilian Lickteig, age 7, from Raytown, MO was named Prince, while four-year-old Kokomi Fukui of Kansas City, MO charmed her way to the throne of Princess. For the Junior Idol competition, entrants submitted a performance video to make the parade-day finals. Winning was 13-year-old Haylee Hankins of Peculiar, MO.

There was strong competition for the \$500 in cash prizes that were awarded to the top three parade entries. First place was awarded to The Wizard of Oz, a funny and creative entry from Canton, GA dedicated to the four founding fathers of the Martin City Parade – Pat Martley, RC VanNoy, Billy Benthusen and Donny Brauner. Taking second was 4 Everyyoung Clowns of Grandview, MO. The Foreign Language Academy of Kansas City, MO finished third.

***(more)***

Topping off the four preliminary rounds of Irish Idol – Karaoke Style competitions was the March 12 Finals at RC’s Back Door in Martin City. Based on the popular TV show, American Idol, the finals provided an exciting conclusion, with James Hankins of KC, MO capturing the \$350 popularity prize and Tina McRey of Raymore, MO winning the \$150 talent prize.

All information on the parade and events that precede and follow it is available on the parade website, [www.irishpalooza.com](http://www.irishpalooza.com).

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Mary Nestel – Parade Director  
816-210-7153 (cell), 816-361-6442 (office)  
[mary.nestel@irishpalooza.com](mailto:mary.nestel@irishpalooza.com)