

First Day of Deer Season November 1999

People in Goneaway are really getting excited. No, it isn't this 70 degree weather in November that has them excited. It's the anticipation for the biggest holiday of the year. The opening of Deer Season on November 15th. Schools, the Post Office and businesses close; if November 15 falls on a Sunday, churches close. This is Goneaway's biggest holiday; bigger than the fourth of July and bigger even than Big Pumpkin Day and Big Pumpkin Day is pretty darn big. It's the biggest holiday of the year because it is the last holiday of the year. It is the last holiday of the year because it is the last time they can have a parade led by the town's new fire truck (new in 1972, that is). If they have it any later than November 15, the truck might get dirty from snow and slush and then it wouldn't look so new anymore. You see, back in 1972, Goneawayans decided to buy a new fire truck to replace the old 39 Ford which didn't start too well and didn't have any headlights. When the new truck was delivered in 1972, it was just before the fourth of July, so the townspeople decided to lead off the parade with their new truck rather than with "Old 39". The truck looked so nice leading the parade, the town council decided it would be a shame to waste the truck on fighting fires, so they voted to keep the new truck looking new by keeping it in the town garage to lead parades and keep using the old 39 Ford to fight fires. The old 39 Ford wasn't too good at fighting fires anymore, but it was really pathetic leading parades (if it would even start on parade day!). This decision by the council was applauded by the citizens, but it is also reason there are so many burned out buildings around Goneaway. If this sounds a little strange to you, then you must think like you were from Goneaway: Goneawayans are practical people and they love parades. They know that eventually the burned out buildings will be torn down and the land turned into parking lots so more people can watch their parades!

Now back to the last festival before winter, First Day of Deer Season. The highlight of the festival is the Hunters Parade. Hunters from all over the midwest flock to Goneaway to participate in the parade and maybe even do a little hunting. If really lucky (read this as: they drink enough beer), they might even catch a glimpse of the legendary "30 Point Buck". Anyway, The parade starts on the west side of Goneaway and heads east along Main Street, led of course by the new and still shiney 1972 fire truck. The truck is followed by the Goneaway High School Band whose only tune along the parade route is "A Hunting We Will Go" played over and over again. Next comes the hunters marching in their hunting garb consisting of orange camouflage hats and orange camouflage jackets and pants, sporting an odd assortment of firearms slung over their shoulders. They are affectionately known as the "Orange Army". Everytime the GHS trumpet player plays, Ta da Ta da Ta da, all the hunters shout "A hunting we will go". The orange tide fills the street curb to curb as it flows for blocks along Main Street. This magnificent Patton like procession would inspire pride in the most tepid of patriots. When the hunters reach the laundromat, the parade stops, the crowd cheers "Hi-Ho the Dary-O" and then the hunters are supposed to shoot their firearms into the air, toss their caps into the air and shout "A hunting we will go". As you can well imagine, this is such an exciting moment for all and in the anticipation and the excitement the hunters usually forget the order of the proceedings and when the crowd shouts "Hi-Ho the Dary-O", the excited hunters first shout "A hunting we will go" throw their caps into the air and then fire their assorted firearms, blasting their caps to smithereens. As tattered and shattered caps call from the sky like orange snow, the excited and slightly embarrassed hunters, look up, shout a few expletives, and stampede to Da Outpost sporting goods store to purchase new caps. Like I said, its a very moving moment, not soon to be forgotten. Sadly and all too soon, the parade is over. Sadder still is the fact that for almost all of the "Orange Army", the only thing they will ever shoot is a falling orange cap or maybe a stop sign or maybe fire several shots at the legendary and mystically agile "Tirty Point Buck".

If you think you would like the First Day of Deer Season, you would really enjoy Big Pumpkin Day. But thats

another story and the night is getting late. Come up and join us sometime, but stay away from the laundromat on opening day and don't get caught in the stampede to Da Outpost after the parade. Safest place to be on opening day is probably in the woods. If you don't want to do that, just stop by the old 210 Tavern and swap hunting yarns with the other hunters, who haven't hunted either.