

Fedhaven Easter events are for young at heart

By Eric Pera

The Ledger

FEDHAVEN — The Easter egg hunt was only a formality. Sort of a tuneup for the main event.

After all, the grandchildren of most residents of this retirement community, located east of Lake Wales, are scattered across the country.

Only a few ever manage an Easter weekend visit.

No, Easter festivities at Fedhaven are intended not for the young — but the young at heart.

The 150 spectators lining the circular parade route within the Town Center courtyard early Saturday were on hand to see a handful of neighbors and friends act like, well, like children.

They were not disappointed.

Nine contestants promenaded in front of judges and spectators, showing off Easter bonnets they designed for the 13th annual bonnet and bike parade.

The event is sponsored by the Fedhaven Men's Club.

Female contestants are judged both for their unique hats, and their three-wheeled bicycles, also decorated for the occasion.

Last year's parade was a chilly, rainy mess.

But clear, blue skies and cool temperatures dominated Saturday's early morning weather, keeping contestants like Angie Newman fresh and frilly.

The 73-year-old retired teacher fashioned a bonnet to look like a two-tiered golf course, complete with club-wielding rabbits.

"You see, instead of having cocktails on the 19th hole, they're having carrots," laughed Newman, pointing to the tiny bunch of vegetables inside a plastic glass on the brim of her hat.

"One year, I made a birthday cake and used real frosting," she said.

Most contestants stick with traditional hat decorations: Easter lillies, ribbon, colored plastic eggs and baby chicks.

One entry featured a hollow egg, filled with Easter grass and a miniature bunny.

They compete for cash prizes, but it's mostly for fun.

Bernice Walker, 79, has lived at Fedhaven for 14 years and never tires of competing in the parade.

She said she doesn't understand why more women don't join in the fun.

"You get lazy after awhile," she said, staring from behind bright green sunglasses, shaded by a wok-shaped hat adorned with assorted Easter toys.

"I don't want to sit around and let moss grow on me."



Amy Harris/The Ledger

Fedhaven resident Bea Maloney models her Easter bonnet at the parade on Saturday.