

Press Release

Reel Lawnmower Team wins Top Parade Awards

Greenbelt Reel Lawnmower Society Precision Drill Team wins *Best in Parade*, *1st in Community*, and *Most Humorous* categories in 2008 Greenbelt Labor Day Parade

Greenbelt MD, 1 September 2008: The all-volunteer Greenbelt Reel Lawnmower Society Precision Drill Team (GRLSPDT) won three awards at the 2008 Labor Day Festival, including the top *Best in Parade* Award, all in support of their message that citizens “KICK GAS” lawnmowers in the interest of the environment and personal well-being. They also were awarded *1st in Community* and *Most Humorous*. They are donating part of their award to the Greenbelt Community Foundation.

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

Drill Team

The Drill Team was conceived by Alan Turnbull, a GHI resident who sought to increase visibility of the simple reel lawnmower. “For those of us with modest yards, reel lawnmowers are the ideal mowing solution,” Turnbull said. “Compared to gasoline engines, these classic machines save time and money. They’re so quiet I can cut my grass any hour of the day or night without disturbing my neighbors. They don’t pollute, emit no greenhouse gases, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil, while being safer for the mowing public and bystanders alike.”

The Drill Team has been practicing their precision drill maneuvers for over one week. Drill routine choreographer Karen Wallace said, “It’s easy to choreograph push mowers because they’re maneuverable and lightweight. Try lifting a gas mower in the air—if you can even breathe through its toxic cloud!”

For immediate release

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

Reel Mowers

The Greenbelt Reel Lawnmower Society encourages everyone to consider reel lawnmowers. Drill team members use reel and electric mowers, but have seen riding mowers trimming even GHI yards. While many Americans have gotten used to the gasoline-powered mower, the society asks people to step back and consider how much time and effort a gasoline mower involves. Even when they work, gas lawnmower engines are notorious for seizing up over the winter and being hard to start—and it's even harder to refill their gas tanks without spilling fuel. At 95 decibels, most gasoline mowers are so loud that they create long-term hearing damage.¹ The Environmental Protection Agency reports that a typical gasoline mower emits as much pollution as eleven cars.²

For people with small lawns, reel push mowers can be a major time saver. A reel mower is much more maneuverable than a heavy gas mower, and takes up less space. They never need gas, have no engine to maintain, and last much longer than gas mowers. Each year, 74,000 American emergency room and ambulance visits are caused by lawnmower trauma including eye injuries, burns, and amputations³—but only a tiny fraction of lawnmower injuries are accidents with a reel mower. The society knows that reel mowers aren't right for every yard—but they are right for most of us! If your lawn is too big for reel mower, an electric cord mower is the next option to consider; they're still quieter, lighter, less polluting, and easier to maintain than gasoline engines. (Four team members share one electric mower they purchased together.) Battery-powered mowers will cover all but extremely large yards—and even they require far less maintenance than gasoline engines.

Whatever type of mower you have, be sure to keep it maintained. Drill team members have gone to Strosnider's Hardware in Bethesda, which has a lawnmower repair and sharpening service.⁴ And always be sure to wear closed-toed shoes if you wish to keep your toes.

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¹ University of Michigan, <http://www.med.umich.edu/opm/newspage/2003/lawnmower.htm>

² Environmental Protection Agency, <http://www.eponline.com/articles/54362/>

³ American College of Emergency Physicians, <http://www.acep.org/pressroom.aspx?id=25846>

⁴ Strosniders website, http://www.strosniders.com/hours_locations