

Kelsey Grammer Helps Spread Cheer During Atlantic City Holiday Parade

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Egg Harbor Township resident Michael Kern, second from left, shakes hands with Kelsey Grammer, grand marshal, during Saturday's parade. Matthew Strabuk Photos, Staff Photographer.

ATLANTIC CITY, NJ (December 2, 2023) — Michael Kern couldn't believe he was able to just walk right up to Kelsey Grammer and shake his hand.

"I did not expect I could just walk into the street and extend my hand," said Kern, of Egg Harbor Township. "He was so nice."

Kern and his mother, Wendy, were among the hundreds of people who lined the resort's streets Saturday afternoon to watch as the Atlantic City Winter Wonderland Parade passed by. Grammer, the actor best known for his role as TV's "Frasier," was the grand marshal.

"I've got a great history with the city of Atlantic City, so to be a part of a celebration that celebrates the city as well, I love it, and it makes me happy," Grammer said ahead of the parade.

The parade, in its third year back after the COVID-19 pandemic, is part of AC Tinseltown, a series of festive events throughout the city, from government-organized events such as the parade, to parties, shows and displays at the casinos and other businesses.

“Anytime you get something with the participants enjoying it, and the people that show up and the spectators all seem to love it,” said the city’s public information officer Andrew Kramer, who was working his second holiday parade. “Anytime you see smiling faces and happy people it’s fun.”

Saturday lent itself to calmer weather compared to the series of storms set to plague some weekend festivities. Events on Friday night were canceled due to the rain, and Sunday might be a washout as well.

But Saturday’s weather cooperated with the parade. It was chilly and a bit damp, but temperatures stayed in the comfortable high 50s.

So it was good weather for Grammer, who sat atop a red Cadillac convertible at the front of the parade, waving to the crowds as the car drove by.

He said he looked forward to touring the town and saying hello to everybody who came out Saturday. But he also loves Christmastime for the spirit behind it.

“It’s a religious holiday, and I look forward to celebrating the King of Kings. That’s a pretty cool thing,” Grammer said. “It’s a real time for family and worship and love. It’s the birth of the prophet of love. It’s a really cool thing.”

The parade began at Pop Lloyd Stadium and headed down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. It turned on Baltic Avenue and made its way toward the heart of Tanger Outlets The Walk. The route continued along Michigan Avenue, turned at Atlantic Avenue and made its way to the finish line at City Hall.

Mayor Marty Small Sr. was being driven in a car behind Grammer’s convertible, waving to the crowd and throwing out the occasional “Fly Eagles Fly” when he saw appropriate Philadelphia attire.

“It’s important for me that we travel through the neighborhoods and we make an impact on the community,” Small said. “Partnerships are the foundation of my administration, and this is another example.”

Followed closely behind Grammer and Small was the Atlantic City Police Department’s float, with its “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” theme and featuring the fan-favorite Grinch. His hit diss-track, “You’re a Mean One, Mr. Grinch” blared from the sound system of a police SUV.

City Council, first responders and local businesses also had floats. The Malcolm X Shabazz High School marching band out of Newark performed. Several floats tossed out candy canes and other treats to the crowd.

The Kerns, of EHT, said this was the first time they attended the parade in Atlantic City. They like to do Ocean City’s parade, but they didn’t go Friday night because of the rain.

“It was a great parade!” said Wendy Kern, who loved the Malcolm X Shabazz band. “It was very festive. That group from Newark (was) great. We really enjoyed it.”

Wendy, a former teacher in Linwood, said her favorite float was the one with the Grinch, especially because she taught Atlantic City police Chief James Sarkos, who also rode on that float. Michael’s favorite was meeting Grammer.

Six-year-old Ethan McClean, with his great aunt and uncle Linda and Troy Hall, came from Newark, Delaware, to catch the parade for the first time. They planned to do some Christmas shopping afterward.

Ethan really enjoyed seeing the big red firetruck that Santa and Mrs. Claus rode on.

Linda and Troy said their favorite was seeing the U.S. Coast Guard members riding on one of their boats. They love celebrating the different armed forces, especially the Coast Guard, who “are everywhere in a moment’s notice, land and sea.”

Linda loved seeing Grammer, as well.

“That was quite a treat!” she said emphatically.

By: John Russo

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