

What is a wench?

The wench is the most traditional, outrageous and politically incorrect of all Mummer. Basically, it's a guy in a dress. The hairier the legs, the colder the beer, the better. About 2,500 men and boys — and the occasional woman or girl — will parade with wench brigades like the infamous, humongous Froggy Carr brigade.

Theme

Wench clubs pick a theme of sorts, and all dresses are designed on that pattern.

About Froggy Carr

The club was started in 1970 by friends and classmates of James "Froggy" Carr after the young Bishop Neumann alum died from football injuries. There are about 100 year-round members, but friends-of-friends can buy their way in for New Year's. It's in the bylaws that the Frogs will always parade as wench.

Rehearsals

No rehearsing, OK? You got a problem wid dat?

Parasol

Rain or shine, no wench feels fully dressed without a parasol, whether the traditional three-tiered model, or the single-tiered variety that Froggy Carr prefers.

Bonnet

No self-respecting wench struts without some kind of hat, in this case a modified shower cap.

Makeup

Each wench faces the world in whiteface, the typical makeup of clowns and mimes.

Dress

The centerpiece of each wench outfit is, of course, the dress. Each New Year's frock is a concoction of satin and other glitzy, high-visibility materials, carefully designed to ensure full mobility for the all-important business of struttin'. Underneath each dress, the well-dressed wench wears Under Armor.

Some history

Wenches trace their origin to 19th Century plantation-era caricatures. Decades ago, wenches marched with dudes, tuxedoed figures who carried canes. Both wore blackface, until it was banned following civil-rights protests in 1964. At that point, dudes went extinct, and wenches went whiteface. Traditionally, wenches were freelance and intoxicated celebrants, strutting behind any brass band they could find. Now they march as accredited wench brigades.

Bag

Each wench accessorizes his ensemble with a matching bag, useful for storing makeup, car keys and other odds and ends.

Bloomers

The high-steppin' gyrations of the Mummer's strut are ideal for revealing the matching satin bloomers that each wench wears beneath his skirts.

Golden "slippers"

Your typical wench is more likely to be shod in Nikes spray-painted gold than the footwear specified in the Mummer's official theme song.

