

Iredell CITIZEN

Gingerbread Houses
Pages 6-7

Christmas Parade
Pages 14-15



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What Child Is This...



Whom Angels Greet

Neil Furr/CITIZEN

DAVARIE GRIMES at the Statesville Christmas Parade

Neil Furr
IREDELL CITIZEN

THE JAYCEES STATESVILLE CHRISTMAS PARADE was 30 minutes away but hawkers were already rumbling their gaudy, top-heavy carts up and down Center Street. Their hottest item, it seemed, was SpongeBob Square Pants as Santa Claus.

In my three and a third decades in Statesville, this was possibly the best weather I had been granted for shooting pictures at any parade. A thin cloud cover, diffusing the

sunlight and keeping harsh shadows off faces, did not overly darken the streets. And, because it was relatively warm, kids were out in droves.

Still, after hundreds of Dogwood, Fourth of July, Halloween, Homecoming, Easter and Christmas Parades, I was having trouble generating enough energy for a two-hour event. When floats, blaring fire trucks, rescue vehicles, marching bands and beauty queens began to stream by at last, I began to long for Santa Claus . . . but not because I had a fondness for elderly elves or wanted to place a last minute order. No, Santa

meant the culmination, the end of yet another protracted parade.

But then, from about 50 feet, I saw the face of four-and-a-half-month-old Davarie Grimes in the window of an SUV sponsored by Faith Child Care and Development Center. His huge peepers, wider than saucers, were scanning a great spectacle - the most monumental wonder Davarie had ever witnessed.

As he absorbed Statesville's gathered energy, he beamed it right back to me and I had no further trouble seeing the parade and Christmas through a child's eyes.