

they prance down Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn.

And once again broadcast media will look on, but only briefly, then disappear.

Now in its 27th official year, the parade is one of the most colorful, electric and well-attended of the city's numerous ethnic pageants; parade organizers say anywhere from 500,000 to a million people will gather for the festival.

But those same organizers lament that despite its size and popularity, the event has never been accorded sufficient media attention.

"It seems to me that there are some people who have less going for them than us who get attention," said Carlos Lezama, the venerable head of the West Indian Day Carnival Committee. "They (the media) should be running us down because of all the financial benefits that the city enjoys because of this parade."

For their part, the network television outlets don't broadcast any of the local ethnic parades, and they cover the major ones only as news events.

"We routinely cover parades as part of the news broadcast," said Fox Television spokesman Bill Collage.

NBC spokesperson Terry Doll said she didn't know whether her station had ever been approached by the Labor Day organizers. She added that part of getting a pa-

take a half hour," Doll said. WPIX, Channel 11, is the one station that does broadcast parades live, following the St. Patrick's Day, Columbus Day and Puerto Rican Day parades.

Lezama said he had approached WPIX to broadcast the Labor Day carnival and was told "they (WPIX) can't do it now."

"We can't carry all the parades," said Debi Meli, a spokeswoman for the station. "Why don't the other stations carry any of them?"

Jean Alexander, the public relations director for the West Indian Day carnival, said she's been asking the media for 18 years why her

was difficult to interrupt additional programming," Alexander said. "Another excuse was that a lot of people don't know about the parade."

Harriet Novet of Time Warner Cable, which makes the annual Trinidad & Tobago Carnival and the Crop Over celebration in Barbados available through Pay-Per-View, said her company has never been approached about broadcasting the parade live.

Ethnic parades themselves are more than vehicles for displaying cultural pride. The turnouts they generate can be a measure of the importance of a community, and the roll call of dignitaries

some that despite the increasing influx of West Indians and their rising consumer and political strength, the community as a whole is still overlooked.

"The Caribbean community is still perceived to be an insignificant community," said Alexander. "And we're black."

Rosanna Rosado, who formerly worked for WPIX and was instrumental in getting the live broadcast for the Puerto Rican Day Parade, said that live broadcasts are largely business decisions.

"I was able to get the Puerto Rican Day Parade on the air because certain companies wanted to target the Latino market," she said. "It's a business relationship: We televised it and sold advertising time."

She suggested that to attract coverage to the West Indian Day Parade, the Caribbean business community might get together and buy advertising time or interest parade sponsors in doing so.

But organizers of the parade, which has heavyweight sponsors such as AT&T, Guinness and Heineken already on board, said that the Caribbean community doesn't have the kind of resources to purchase TV time.

"Even if we could pool money from the 25 members on our committee, we still couldn't afford to buy the time necessary to telecast the parade," said Alexander.

## News columnist hurt in accident

Daily News columnist Jim Sleeper was in serious condition yesterday at a western Massachusetts hospital after losing control of his bike on a local road.

He sustained head injuries when the bike careened into a ditch. Sleeper wasn't wearing a helmet, police said.

The columnist suffered a skull fracture, according to Berkshire Medical Center officials. Doctors must wait until swelling in the brain subsides before they can assess the extent of the injury. Sleeper was not in a coma, but was under heavy sedation, according to friends.

A CAT scan was performed but results were unavailable late yesterday.

Sleeper was returning to his family's vacation home in Lenox after buying newspapers and coffee yesterday morning when the accident occurred.

It was unclear what triggered the crash along Route 183. Police do not believe a car was involved.

Family members and friends were at Sleeper's bedside yesterday.