

LEE'S SUMMIT JOURNAL

Strotherfest - It's never too early to plan

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Special to the Journal

Commentary

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Having been involved in the planning and execution of Lee's Summit's first Strotherfest, I am rather euphoric at the moment. One full week after Strotherfest concluded with Liverpool's final song, it has finally dawned on me what our band of amateur carries have actually accomplished, and I am very proud to say I was part of it.

I cannot speak for the 200 other parishioners of Holy Spirit Catholic Church who helped make it happen, but I hope I capture a little of their pride and excitement in this short commentary.

If I tried to list the names of all the people who contributed to our success, I would fail, so I won't even make the attempt. However, there are two individuals who must be mentioned: Ed and Vicky Zurliene. It was their idea, their vision, their leadership and their experience with a similar community festival back home in Illinois that made it happen. Salute.

Similarly, if I tried to list all the individual and corporate sponsors, I would undoubtedly list them in the wrong order of contribution. Let's just say we couldn't have done it without any of them. They all saw the potential in Strotherfest to bring people together in a family-oriented environment. Thanks so much for your good hearts and community-minded interests.

That being said, I will mention two specifically - from a personal standpoint. As facilities chairman, my responsibilities included lighting, power, sanitation, security and a bunch of other stuff that just needed to be done, including preparation of the church grounds for the onrush of cars and people. Without the full support of Dave Gale and Gale Communities, my current euphoric state might be better described as comatose. Mr. Gale provided a supervised, three-man crew for mowing, grading and trimming acres and acres of parking space. Admittedly, it was a bit bumpy and a bit dusty, but it was land we could not have done without. Thanks, Dave. Thanks, Ethan, Adam, Jason, Stephen and Travis.

Secondly, the total support from Mike Collar and his brothers and sister at Winco Fireworks has been unbelievable. By supplying the four large tents and six-man crews needed to erect them and tear them down, they directly impacted the bottom line of this fund-raising event. You are the best. Finally, to the people who ate our food, drank our beverages, played the games we provided and took advantage of the free concerts, thanks for coming to our party. As this was our first attempt at anything of this magnitude, we know there are a few things to fix, so we'll be tweaking next year's program. However, our primary focus will be on maintaining the small-town festival atmosphere. From all of us at Holy Spirit, we hope you all come back next year to enjoy another wonderful summer outing.

Our various committee chairpersons will be meeting soon to discuss general plans for 2008, so if you have any comments about how we can improve Strotherfest, my e-mail address is mixzx@comcast.net. No need to mention the need for funnel cakes - that's already at the top of our list.

Mick Mithelavage, a Lee's Summit resident and author, is a guest columnist for the Journal. To respond to today's commentary, call the Journal's Rant & Rave line at 816-282-7020, or send comments via the Internet at www.lsjournal.com.