

## Minutes, Festival Planning Team Wrap-up Dinner and Meeting October 15, 2008

**Attending:** Daniela O'Callaghan, Maria & Rusty Cappadona, Alex Sgoutas, Tom Bennett, John Davis, Erin Halsey, Fr. Mike (dinner meeting chef), Fr. David, Dan & Florence Loch, Bob & Pat Olson, and Suzanne Calnon

Fr. Mike prepared delicious appetizers which we enjoyed during conversation and drinks starting at 6:00 pm. Fr. David said grace and we ate Fr. Mike's exceptionally fine dinner near 7:00 pm. We began the meeting portion of the evening at 8:03 pm.

### Committee Reports

**TICKETS** – Bob Olson

- **2008 festival ticket sales** –

	Sales	Dollars	Attendance
Adults	176	\$2,252	153
Children	75	\$594	64
Total-1	251	\$2,846	217
Teens, est.		free	30
Total-2			247

\* Percent attending of those who bought tickets: 86.54%. This compares with a high of 93.8% (363 in 2007) and a low of 80.5% (326 in 2003). Average attendance 2000-2008 is 399.

\* The \$2,846 in ticket sales is the lowest amount ever for the festival. Since 2000 ticket sales have averaged \$3,700 each year.

- **Expenses and Profit/Loss** –

Food	\$860
Paper goods	\$283
Entertainment	\$905
Set Up	\$109
Total expense	\$2,157
Ticket sales	\$2,846
Profit	\$689

- **Suggestions for next year –**

- \* Bob remains strongly opposed to eliminating numbered tickets in favor of un-numbered Xeroxed tickets. Numbered tickets are essential to his record-keeping of numbers sold and dollars received.
- \* For next year it was decided to phone people we select to sell tickets and not have sign-ups for ticket sellers. This is the way festival ticket sellers originally were chosen in the early years of the festival.
- \* Bob will explore making more simple the form that ticket sellers use to account for sales.

**LOCATION OF 2009 FESTIVAL: CHURCH OR PARK? –**

- **Advantages/disadvantages of each –**

- \* At church the festival attains a closeness, a better sense of community, is easier for cooking and set-up, and is preferred by the seniors among the parishioners. The sound system is much better at the church than at the park. There is no \$360 fee to the city for the park and a custodian and no worries about a last-minute change from the park to the church in case of rain.
- \* Yet there is significantly less attendance at church than at the park, no sack races, tug-o-war, or outdoor events. The park is preferred by parents for children; a playground is at the park and open space. A park makes it more of an outing, a picnic, more festive with more possibilities. A 2007 poll of parishioners showed a 60%-40% preference for the park.

- **Solomonic decision on location (and on over-all chairperson)**

- \* We decided to alternate between the park and the church. 2009 will be the park, 2010 will be the church (St. Jerome Church's 50th Anniversary), and so on.
- \* In like manner, the over-all chair of the festival will alternate between Suzanne and Dan. Suzanne will chair in years when the festival is at the park; Dan, when it is at church.

**VOLUNTEERS – Florence**

- **Problem areas –**

- \* Few sign-ups for Set Up. If not for the Saturday morning help of the Men's Meeting only two people (plus the two Set Up co-chairs) would have had to do all the set-up work.

- **Teen participation –**

- \* Teens have not usually attended the festival in any great numbers. This year TOTAL teens were offered free admission for the first time in return for their helping with set-up and clean-up and children's games. Approximately 30 teens attended.
- \* They did help with set-up and with children's games, but did not help with clean-up or take-down. However, everyone there at the conclusion of the festival at 5:00 pm pitched in on clean-up and there was no lack of help.
- \* All of us were agreed that having so many teens there at the festival certainly was worth giving them free admission and that their presence added to the day and to the sense of community for our parish. Their presence was worth far more than their ticket sales dollars.

**SET UP / CLEAN UP – Alex and Rusty**

- **In general –**

- \* Set Up went well, especially due to help from the Men's Ministry men and from Fitzgerald Awning.
- \* The Men's Meeting men set up the hall on Saturday morning after their meeting. They were a huge help.
- \* There were enough tables and chairs from what we had on hand. There turned out not to be any need to rent more chairs or tables.
- \* Use of the hall's rear room for Arts & Crafts worked very well.
- \* Take-down/Clean-up was a miracle because everyone who was there at the 5:00 pm close of the festival helped with clean-up and with taking down the tents outside and the tables and chairs inside.
- \* The TOTAL teens did help with Sunday morning set-up, but it is unrealistic to expect teens to be self-motivated to figure out what needs to be done and do it.

- **Fitzgerald Awning's Tents –**

- \* Fitzgerald Awning helped us greatly by donating the use of two 20x20 tents which Fitzgerald themselves (Greg Genuario) set up themselves in 30 minutes on the blacktop in front of the hall on Friday before Festival Sunday.

- \* Dan sent a letter of thanks to Fitzgerald Awning on October 10th. Dan also sent on October 10th to Stew Leonard's their filled-out form and a festival photo (as they asked) for their donation of fruit drinks and hot dog buns.

**FOOD** – Tom, John, Maria Olivieri (She could not attend the dinner.)

- **In general** –

- \* The food was very well-received, especially the pork butt roast. This year had a less complicated menu.
- \* The cooking went well, especially with the help at All Saints' School kitchen the Saturday morning before festival Sunday. That went better than last year and the work was all done by noon. Sunday there was plenty of volunteer help with food.
- \* Chicken cutlets left over were used for the Festival Planning Team dinner. Other unused food was donated to the Norwalk Soup Kitchen or used by the funeral reception team.

- **Park or church** –

- \* Without a doubt the church hall is easier for food prep and cooking than the park, but the park is special and offers a much better setting for the festival, although it does mean a lot more work.

**ENTERTAINMENT** – Daniela, Erin, Maria C.

- **In general** –

- \* The children loved the Arts & Crafts, the games, the popcorn and Italian ice, and especially the magician who really jazzed them.
- \* It was especially good to have the teens there. The teens stayed all afternoon and helped w. the children throughout the afternoon.
- \* The sound system was very good at the church hall.

**PUBLICITY** – Dan

- **In general** –

- \* Publicity went well and was pervasive.
- \* Dan sent a letter of thanks to Fitzgerald Awning on October 10th. Dan also sent on October 10th to Stew Leonard's their filled-out form and a festival photo (as they asked) for their donation of fruit drinks and hot dog buns.

**LITURGY –**

• **In general –**

- \* Joe O’Callaghan missed the dinner, but all agreed that the festival liturgy in church was marvelous. Joe did a great job organizing the flags and a dynamic opening of the liturgy.

**BAKING CONTEST – Fr. Mike**

- There were almost no entries (like, three) and Fr. Mike strongly suggested that we drop the Baking Contest from next year’s festival.

**THEME FOR NEXT YEAR’S FESTIVAL –**

- \* Italian was suggested, but Italian will be the menu for the Parish Dinner and Raffle next June at All Saints’ School.
- \* Mardi Gras also was suggested.
- \* We decided to delay deciding on a 2009 theme until we begin Festival Planning Team meetings again next year.

The meeting ended at 9:17 pm.

Submitted by:

Dan Loch, Chairperson

December 5, 2008