

## Minutes, Festival Planning Team Meeting of July 29, 2008

**Attending:** Daniela O'Callaghan, Maria & Rusty Cappadona, Dan Loch, Pat Olson [for Bob Olson], Alex Sgoutas, Tom Bennett, Fr. Mike Hoag, S.J.

Dan began the meeting with a brief opening prayer at 7:35 pm.

### **Planning people needs**

Because several veteran festival planning people could not participate this year, a number of new people joined the Festival Planning Team:

- Set-up / Clean-up – Alex Sgoutas and Rusty Cappadona
- Baking Contest – Fr. Mike Hoag and Angela Carey
- Liturgy – Joe O'Callaghan, Jr.
- Food – Maria Olivieri will help Tom with paper goods and drinks

And at the last Festival Planning Team meeting on June 24, Dan had been elected 2008 overall festival chairperson.

### **Start/End time of Festival**

After brief discussion during which Dan argued for the 12 noon to 4:00 PM time of past parish festivals with a separate 4 pm Festival Liturgy, the majority of the team decided to confirm the 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM time of this year's Sunday, September 28th parish festival as was suggested at the last Festival Planning Team meeting. It was felt the 2 pm start would better accommodate Sunday sports events parish children might have, that plenty of food would be available for a late lunch and obviate the need for any dinnertime meal people might want, and that the 6 pm end would greatly help the priests of the parish by making separate 4 pm and 6 pm Masses unnecessary. The regularly scheduled 6:00 PM Sunday Mass will be the Liturgy which concludes the 2008 festival.

### **Price and selling of Festival tickets**

**Price** – Although food prices are up from 2007, the majority of the team decided to keep the same festival ticket prices as 2007. Last year with attendance around 300, the festival was \$967 to the good and this year we do not have to pay the \$360 custodian fee for Cranbury Park since the festival is at the church hall.

2008 festival ticket prices are:

Advance – adult (14+) \$12, child (3-13) \$7, under age 3 free

At door – adult (14+) \$16, child (3-13) \$10, under age 3 free

**Selling weekends** – It was agreed tickets would be sold after all Masses only two weekends, September 13-14 (the start of REACH) and September 21-22 (when Julie Coyne addresses each Mass for financial support of her good work in Guatemala).

**Training for ticket sellers** – It was agreed that there would be a mandatory training session for ticket-sellers a week night the week before the first week of ticket sales. It was agreed that the Sign-ups for ticket-sellers would begin a week earlier than last year, namely on August 23-24.

**Discussion of increasing ticket sales –**

- A letter about the Festival to all 1,200 parish families was suggested, perhaps with the possibility of selling advance tickets via this letter mailing much as the Parish Raffle does. Some felt this would involve more preparation, people, time, and energy than we had this year and might best be saved as a possibility for 2009 when we hope again to have Cranbury Park as our location.
- It was agreed a postcard mailing about the Festival would go out to all 1,200 parish families the second week of September.
- In light of a concern that a parish festival located at the church from the very start (versus as a sudden Plan B due to rain) would draw substantially fewer guests than if it were at Cranbury Park, Alex suggested coordinating a selling team of ten people each of whom would agree to sell 10 festival tickets to each of 10 people. While this strategy is used for the parish raffle, it again was thought to be a strategy best saved for 2009, again when we have Cranbury Park as our location. Dan pointed out that the church hall fit about 150 well (as it does for GIFT religious education sessions) and that 300 guests might be the maximum the hall and church grounds likely could accommodate.
- While the parish festival has been thought of since its beginning in 2000 as a parish event for St. Jerome parishioners, Alex challenged us to think of it as an opportunity to foster interest in the parish among those who do not regularly attend Mass and even among non-parishioners. Yet again space considerations and the need for more preparation, people, time, and energy than we have this year made 2009 seem more appropriate for this idea. At the festival wrap-up meeting in October we can begin early discussion of it.

## **Further development of the Caribbean theme**

### **Food –**

- **Food to be served** – Tom outlined the types of food to be offered: fried pork, jerk chicken, rice, salad, and hot dogs and French fries (for the children). A pig roast would be too complicated.
- **Beer and wine** – Tom argued for BYOB beer and wine and/or beer and wine for a donation, as the parish had for the highly successful Lenten Fish Fry evening. Alcohol also is available at the annual parish raffle dinner. Others pointed out we never have had liquor at a parish festival because we wanted to show, especially to children and young people, that a good time could be had by all without alcohol. For the Oktoberfest parish festival in 2006 we specifically had advertised it as a non-alcoholic Oktoberfest. Dan will ask Fr. Dave about beer and wine at the festival.

### **Entertainment –**

- **Entertainment ideas** – Daniela has begun planning 4 hours worth of entertainment ideas. She mentioned: big, bright colors; Caribbean-style music; limbo dancing; conga line; hair braiding; a talent show modeled on “American Idol;” many crafts; games like tug-o-war and sack races on the back and side lawns of the church. Crafts may be set up on Saturday, maybe outside in tents. More details to come.
- **Music** – For music, the parish “Second Wind” band is not into reggae music and has not practiced for the festival, but a steel drum band is available for two hours for \$425 and iPod Caribbean music can be played over the sound system throughout the afternoon. There will be no inflatable Bounce House because there are no level unpaved surfaces on which to place it.

### **Publicity –**

- **Bulletin board display** – Daniela again offered to have the Entertainment people construct the parish festival display on the church hallway bulletin board as they did last year when they created a fabulous Western theme display.
- **Slide show of last year’s festival at Mass** – At last year’s wrap-up meeting it was suggested that in order to generate ticket sales a short slide show of last year’s festival be shown the week before the festival at the end-of-Mass announcements at the 9:15 am Children’s Mass and possibly at all that weekend’s Masses. However, Julie Coyne is due to speak that weekend (September 21-22) at all the Masses in her annual

appeal for parish support of her great good work in Guatemala. The previous weekend (September 14) is the first class of REACH religious education. Instead of a slide show, on September 13-14 and 21-22 we will have large posterboard displays of 2006 and 2007 festival photos at the back of the church where they will be seen by the departing congregation.

## **Other**

- **Explaining the Food volunteer role** – Tom requested and we agreed that the Food Server volunteers be called “Food Helpers” and that they may be asked to do more than simply serve food to guests on their plates. Last year one or more Server volunteers refused to help replenish food in the serving trays or to do such small chores as cut onions because they had signed up only to serve food, nothing else.
- **Tents** – Bob Olson said no one responded to his bulletin appeals for tents that can be used on festival day. Tom will ask John Davis for the use of his tent. Dan will provide his two pop-up 10x10 tents.
- **Baking Contest** – Fr. Mike enlisted Angela Carey to help him. He will determine the categories, most likely Adults and Children. No specifically Caribbean food category seemed likely.
- **Phoning volunteers** – Volunteers need to be reminded of and thanked for their sign-up by phone the week before Festival. Florence will do this for the Food and Entertainment volunteers.
- **Check-in table for volunteers on Festival Day** – On Festival Day there will be a check-in table for volunteers where they get instructions about where to report for their assignments.
- **Reserving Cranbury for next year** – Suzanne Calnon said she would request the Cranbury Park pavilion for our 2009 festival at the end of this September, a year in advance.

## **Upcoming Festival planning meeting dates**

We confirmed our next meeting dates, each at 7:30 pm in the Kevin Eidt Youth Room:

- Tuesday, August 19
- Tuesday, September 9
- Tuesday, September 23

Fr. Mike concluded the meeting with a brief prayer. The meeting ended at 9:05 pm.

Submitted by:  
Dan Loch, Chairperson  
August 5, 2008

## Reference

To have some sense of a budget, here are some known figures. Our goal is to break even.

- **Festival Attendance:**

TICKETS	Site	Sold	Dollars	Attendance
2006	church	352		293 = 83%
2007	park	387	\$4,578	363 = 94%

- **Festival Expenses and Income:**

	Food*	Entertain	All expenses	After expenses
2006	\$1,026			+\$1,873
2007	\$2,199	\$913	\$3,611	+\$ 967

\* includes Drinks and Paper Goods

- **Anticipated 2008 festival ticket sales:**

Adults	290	\$3,480
Children	80	\$ 560
TOTAL	360	\$4,040