



Waunakee Rotary Club

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WaunaFest gets bigger and better each year, but without volunteers, this year's festival could be the last.

That was the message WaunaFest President Larry Hooker delivered to the Rotary Club at its July 15 meeting.

Larry, who has been involved in Waunakee's annual festival for the past 14 years, said six key committee members – the president, first vice president, second vice president, treasurer, food court and grounds committee chairs – make up the executive board and are in charge of 95 percent of all committees.

"If any of those people goes away, it's coming to a quick end. We're always one year away from WaunaFest ending," Larry said.

Volunteers are scarce, he said, and some organizations have had to discontinue their involvement.

Larry said the WaunaFest committee needs to continue to look ahead to ensure the growth of the event. He sees in other communities, one entity – rather than several volunteers – oversees the festivals, he said.

About 75 percent of other community festivals are organized by the Chambers of Commerce, Larry said. Some communities hire a festival planner.

"I see a day soon when the management and business end will have to come under the control of one entity," Larry said.

Larry, a native of Sturgis, S.D., said he first became involved with festivals with the Sturgis Rally there. His grandmother owned an A&W.

As an adult, Larry and his family lived in California and went to the county fair there. When the Hooker family moved to Waunakee, they attended WaunaFest but found that children's entertainment was lacking.

So Larry suggested more family entertainment venues, and then-president Jerry Palmer put him to work.

Out of that grew teen dances on Thursday evenings along with carnival rides that evening. Friday's fireworks are also new, he said.

"It gives us four days in July to show off the village, the service clubs and the volunteers," he said.

Larry said it takes a year to plan WaunaFest, and the money raised goes back to the community.

"I'd like to see us shout that out more," he said

At one time, the Waunafest committee received 25 percent of the service clubs' profits to defray expenses. That's changed, Larry said. Instead, the WaunaFest committee makes sure it has a profit of \$40,000 from the festival to fund next year's event; that's lowered the percentage paid by each of the clubs to about 11 to 13 percent.

WaunaFest continues to grow, and now WaunaFest partners with other nonprofits to organize fifth- and sixth-grade dances. The proceeds go toward the nonprofits, but hopefully, the volunteer spirit is instilled into children early, Larry said.

"The greatest challenge is continuing the volunteer base," Larry said.

Other items:

- President Brent Ziegler said the boat cruise was a great time.

- Phil Willems said the plans for making our own pizzas at WaunaFest were scrapped, and instead, Pizza Hut will bake pizzas fresh on site. Dan Statz said more help is needed at WaunaFest Saturday night. Also, Piggly Wiggly will distribute coupons for Bellatoria pizzas during the WaunaFest parade and donate \$2 to

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Calendar of Events:

- July 22-25, *WaunaFest*
- July 26-27, *Service Club Olympics*

Rotary for each sold.

- Mike Ableidinger said the club will have a water station for the 10-mile run at the Montondon subdivision and help is needed.

- Linda Olson said help is needed on the float at 10 a.m. Saturday, July 24, at Qual Line Fence. Also, the float could use a small wooden bridge.

- Connie Blau said the senior picnic served about 170 people. He thanked Rich Wipperfurth and Rex Endres along with the folks who lent grills, for their help and Harriet Statz for the music.

- A going away party for Byrd is set for July 21.

Guests: Larry Hooker, guest of Ellen Schaaf; Jonathan Allen, guest of Leonard Allen.

Visiting Rotarians: Art Drake, Normal, Ill.

Birthdays: July 23, Jim Brussell; July 25, Jim Schmitz; July 27, Traci Mann; July 28, Bob Arntz.

Anniversaries: None.

Prayers: July 22, Pat Durden; July 29, Leonard Allen; Aug. 5, Susan Vergeront.

Programs: July 22, Margie Groom, Friendship Force Wisconsin; July 29, Classification talks, Roxanne Johnson and Becky Ohan; Aug. 5, Club Assembly.

Greeters: July 22, Kathy Cefalu and Scott Cochems; July 29, John Cullen and Al Dassow.