

2016 Somers Independence Day Parade & Ice Cream Social Report

The parade theme for 2016 was "**UNITED WE STAND!**" Our parade Grand Marshalls were Larry & Greta Zirbel, who have generously volunteered serving at the ice cream social for over 15 years and lived in Somers for decades. We had another beautiful day, sunny skies and 78 degree temperatures. Starting at 1:30, the Cub Scout Pack #436 preceded the parade by handing 5,238 flags donated by David Leet Post #552 to bystanders to wave at the veterans. At 2:00 sharp, the Somers Fire & Rescue Department and several local departments sounded their sirens along the route. Ron Bailey of Silverspoon Entertainment proceeded throughout the route to announce veterans and parade participants. He was followed by the American Legion Color Guard Post #552 and Bagpiper Mary and her husband on drums to honor ten vehicles carrying American veterans. The Zirbels were honored as this year's parade marshals, driven by Mr. Moldenhauer. This year's entertainment included the Rambler Band, SLHS Summer Strings, KR Bluegrass band, Mike Schneider's Polka Band, MGV Harmonia, River City Rhythm, Jolly Giant Stilt-walkers and a newcomer, Sam the Wheeler. We were fortunate to have many floats entered: Snap-On Tools, Somers Community Church, Parkside Baptist Church, Burr Oaks Greenhouse, Somers Chargers 4-H, United Methodist Surfshack VBS, Funktree Rental, SOZO Chiropractic, and K Town Driving School. Another newcomer, Festival Foods, entered the Festival Foods Cart which was towed due to the starter going out that morning, but was a popular attraction! The parade also included Relay for Life, Somers Elementary, All Saints, boy scout troops, Scott Barter, Dr. Destruction and local, county and state politicians. Local businesses included Festival Foods, Walmart, Kenosha News, Sam's Club, Jelly Belly, Racine Toyota, Southeast Wisconsin Paranormal Investigation Team and Michael DeLuca Realty. Both Carthage College and Parkside University entered vehicles. We also had over 10 local farmers' tractors, fifteen classic cars, Baby Boomer Bikers, Miss Bristol, and horses from the Leoris family and Lace Feather Gypsies, which are always a crowd-pleaser.

Danny UpChurch, a new entertainment feature, worked the crowds east and west of the Village Hall prior to the parade and afterwards at the Ice Cream Social. Using a remote-control puppet on a mini-tractor and a microphone, he was a hit with younger and older alike! There were 86 entries in total. Over 6,000 people set up chairs, blankets and tents along the route to enjoy the parade and catch hundreds of pounds of candy. The parade route began at the west exit of Shoreland Lutheran High School, proceeded east down Highway E and turned the corner at EA (72nd Avenue) ending at Somers Elementary.

The Somers Fire & Rescue Association sold food and beverages at Fire Station #1 and along the parade route before the start of the parade and during the Ice Cream Social to hungry parade bystanders. Shoreland Lutheran also provided refreshments during staging. A veteran from Wisconsin Veteran's Home volunteered his time as parking attendant at SLHS. Immediately following the parade we enjoyed our traditional ice cream social, served by

volunteers from Bethany Lutheran Church. The Big Balloon Tycoon made balloon animals for the children and Let's Face It facepainter, Maddie, decorated several children and some adult faces! Several enjoyed music by the KR Bluegrass Band performed in front of the Village Hall during the social. Cake, ice cream, juice and supplies for the ice cream social, donated by Walmart, water, donated by Sam's Club, and ice to keep everthing cold, donated by 7-Eleven, were enjoyed by about 350 attendees at the Leon Dreger Hall.

The parade committee continued the tradition of supporting the parade solely on generous sponsor donations the Village/Town greatly appreciates! We tried something new this year. We designated suggested guidelines for donations. Sponsors who gave \$500-\$1000 were given six V. I. P. tickets to enjoy shade in a V. I. P. tent while watching the parade and some food from the Fire & Rescue Association's vendor stand. This year's sponsors were **Titanium (\$1000)**: Festival Foods & Walmart; **Gold (\$500)**: Sam's Club, Stainless Products, 7-Eleven, & Globe Contractors; **Silver (\$250)**: First Industrial, Dejno's Inc., Davison Law, Baxter & Woodman, Reesmans Excavating, Nielsen, Madsen & Barber, Golden Oil, Bear Realty, Ruekert & Mielke, & Gregg Sinnen; **Bronze (\$100)**, Draeger-Langendorf Funeral Home, Lee Plumbing, Andrea & Orendorff LLP, Kenosha News, CJW Inc., Jerry Smith Farms, Huck Realty, Tri City Bank, Hastings Air, Yutka Fence, Proko Funeral Home, Citizens for Bob Zapf, Mark Molinaro, & Ben and Bette Harbach; other sponsors were Lifeline Billing Systems, Jockey International, Associated Appraisal Consultants, and J. Schantek. Again, Ron Bailey's services (Silverspoon Entertainment) of deejaying at the staging of the parade and announcing the parade entries were much appreciated. Shoreland Lutheran High School and Somers Elementary were gracious hosts allowing us to utilize their parking lots for staging and ending the parade. Somers' Public Works, led by Jerry Smith and Robert Rojas, were very helpful once again, and Pat's Services also provided a 50% discount on handicapped rentals for parade-goers.

Somers Independence Day Parade and Ice Cream Social 2017 will be on July 4th at 2:00. The Somers Parade Committee thanks the sponsors, residents and bystanders that make this the most anticipated event of the Town & Village!

Respectfully submitted,
Somers Parade Committee

J. Schantek

Al - Fisher

Ben Harbach

Vern Kotten