

## **VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD CITATION**

### **WAYNE CONWAY**

Sometimes a relative newcomer can bring energy and leadership to a community while at the same time knowing how to work with its long-time traditions and show respect for its ways of doing things. Wayne Conway is such a person.

From the moment Wayne moved into Verona, he became a committed volunteer. He, along with his wife Judy, joined the Verona Lions and volunteered to help with the Verona Festival Committee. It didn't take long for us all to see that we were in luck.

Managing the Verona Festival is a job that few people take on as a volunteer. Year round you are the place where the buck stops for every aspect of this three day celebration that brings thousands of people to public land. It means last minute changes in schedule and late night emergency phone calls about everything from security to port-a-potties. Yet when our previous manager took his well-earned retirement, Wayne volunteered to shadow him in his last year and take up the role the year after that. He has done a stellar job. Of course, running the festival takes excellent management skills, and Wayne has proved invaluable in this regard. But being in charge of an all volunteer community event also takes a person who can hear what the volunteers need and want in a festival. Wayne is a person who can argue for his position, but bend to the will of the group when he hears their arguments. And not to be overlooked is his complete willingness to work in the dirt. From parking cars to cleaning port-a-potties, we all know that Wayne is one of us.

Similarly, Wayne has leapt into his commitment to the Verona Lions. As this year's president, he has overseen every aspect of a \$150,000 hall renovation that has already improved the organization's rentals and makes the Verona Lions kitchen the envy of other mid-size venues. Not only has he navigated the always murky waters of contractor no-shows and mistakes, but he oversaw the Lions members' volunteer workforce. His can-do approach made use of their considerable carpentry, tiling, and electrical skills while encouraging all members to take part in the planning and refitting. Wayne was rarely absent when work was being done, and he always got as dirty of the rest of the members.

Through all of this, Wayne has brought several new members to the organization and instituted a number of events that pair other community organizations with Lions activities to the benefit of all.

In addition, Wayne is an active member of the Railton Branch of the Knights of Columbus, oversaw the installation of the new Christmas lights in McMullan Park, and is a regular member of the ad hoc group of Verona workers who built our fine village signs and are currently sprucing up the conservation area on Silver/Hambly Lake.

Anyone who has ever moved to a new place knows how hard it can be to break into the mix. Anyone who has lived in one place for a long time knows what a special person it takes to join the community as a newcomer and effect change for the better while respecting tradition.

Wayne Conway is that person, and we are delighted to congratulate him as Portland District's Volunteer of the Year.