

By Gayle VanVooren

The Ghent community had a fun time at their special celebration last week, thanks to a committee who had looked at all the community's needs. There was something for every age group to enjoy at the Belgian-American Days festival.

We name these committee for you: Steve Sussner, Gary Laleman, Bill Maertens, Jordy Beek, Sabra Serreyn, Justin Thordson and Heidi Runia. They were the ones to get it all started -with a whole host of volunteers then stepping forward to assist as the weekend approached.

I was amazed at the games and activities staged for the youth of the community. The Ghent Park was a beehive of activity, with so many volunteers helping at each station. The kids were having a great time bobbing for apples, throwing a football, playing horseshoes, jumping in the sack races, and running obstacle courses. Parents and grandparents snapped pictures, kids laughed and enjoyed themselves, and you just know they'll want to come back next year. And that's where the success begins.

Staging events that are interesting for all ages bring people back year after year. They remember the fun they had, and it's not hard to get them to return. That is a real compliment to the staging committee.

The garden tractor pull has also grown in this area, and has become an event that many follow. Ghent knew that, and had bleachers in place for the spectators, and an announcer to tell who was pulling, and the distance they went. It was easy and fun to watch - and the contestants enjoyed the encouragement from the crowds.

Younger entrants in this event had as much of a chance of winning as the older folks. It was fun, and you soon had your favorites to cheer for. This event is sure to grow in popularity.

The Classic Car Show was also a good idea - bringing such beautiful cars to town to show off, and give folks a chance to look at the vehicles of "the good old days". These cars were shined up to perfection, and owners were more than willing to talk about their vehicles.

One such vehicle, a 1955 Ford Crown Victoria, was a combination of hot pink and white, owned by Ron Binnebose of Montevideo. He showed pride in this vehicle, saying "That's my Barbie". It was just one of the beautiful cars and pickups that were on display during the Ghent festival, drawing lots of lookers.

Rolle bolle, softball, and games of bean bag also drew many entrants, and watchers, alike. People could get in on the action, cheer for their favorites, and just have fun in a small-town festival.

The Ghent folks finished it all off with a street dance, food booths, a parade, water soccer, and a Belgian cookie cookoff. It was a fun weekend, and people have lots of good memories from their adventure back home to be with family and friends. Isn't that what it's all about?