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Organizer has big plans for a big party

By Peggy Roberts (published: February 01, 2007)

SCARBOROUGH – Planning a party is like wearing a straitjacket: It can leave you tied up in knots, but it feels great if you can pull it off.

While books and TV shows – not to mention certain celebrities whose very names are synonymous with party perfection – dedicate themselves to inspiring wannabe hosts, even the best of these converts will likely fall short of the 18,000-plus person guest list faced by Judi Clancy.

As event planner for Scarborough’s 350th anniversary, Clancy must coordinate volunteers, create a full menu of tantalizing entertainment ideas and serve up a memorable celebration that will satiate all who attend the July 2008 festivities.

Not that she hasn’t had experience. With 20 years participation in the Yarmouth Clam Festival – two of them as director and three as co-director – and still a member of its steering committee, the Yarmouth resident finds it hard to stop gathering ideas for events.

“I do think about it all the time,” Clancy said. “If there’s a festival, I go to it.”

But her party planning days began before the Clam Festival; before running booster club events or ice cream socials; before reunion-planning for her alma mater, Bowdoin College; even before attending law school at the University of Maine. Her party planning roots reach back to the years her husband attended law school at Dartmouth University, when the couple answered a bulletin board ad to run a local inn.

With two cows, two horses, a pony, tennis courts, a swimming pool, cooking and cleaning to take care of, Clancy’s youthful experience as innkeeper of the Old Town Farm birthed a lasting interest in organizing, managing and entertaining.

While Clancy may be in charge after receiving a two-year contract from the 350th Committee last fall, she prefers not to be in the spotlight.

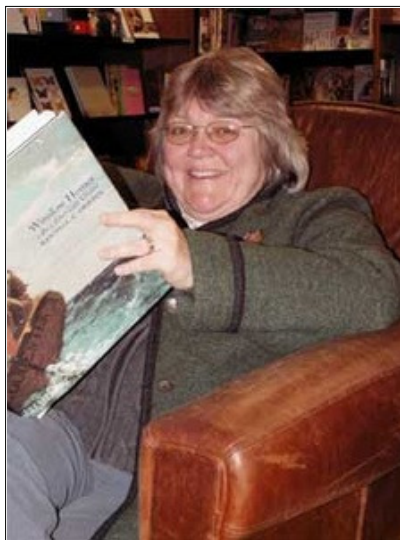
“I want to be a facilitator to make this happen,” she said. “This is about the project getting done well. I don’t want to be a spokesperson.”

As she plans, she is focusing on capturing the character of Scarborough with the festivities – a task that can only be accomplished by channeling the energy and enthusiasm of the 350th Committee and the celebration’s many volunteers.

Guiding choices

Soon after she started, Clancy surveyed committee members to determine what activities were important to include in the celebration. While a parade was high on the list, other events weren’t all so clear.

She hopes to guide the members in choosing at least a few activities that



Scarborough 350th celebration organizer Judi Clancy: “This is about the project getting done well. I don’t want to be a spokesperson.”

Roberts photo

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will leave a legacy for future generations in Scarborough, such as inviting the Portland Symphony Orchestra to give a concert. She also plans to recommend other unique events at the committee meeting in February.

According to the steering committee chairwoman, Annalee Rosenblatt, Clancy is organized, detailed and high energy.

"I think what Judi brings to the table is that she's very intelligent and she has immense experience working with volunteers and government entities," Rosenblatt said. "She's insisting the people on the committee buy into the events."

Clancy said business involvement is essential to the success of the celebration. And she would like to see businesses participating in the parade.

"Hopefully, we can give back some visibility to businesses that sponsor floats," she said.

Along with sponsors, the committee needs more volunteers. Clancy said she always welcomes more help and has no trouble delegating.

"Don't say you want to do something if you don't," she said. "I never forget that - when the time comes, I'll find you."

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• FYI: For more information on Scarborough's 350th, visit the Web site at www.scarborough350.org.
