

Carpathia Nachrichten



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Farewell to Freedom Hill

Some would call it the end of an era. Those of us old enough to remember its beginnings, may mourn its demise. Others who worked faithfully year after year may rejoice. No matter how you feel about it, there is no doubt that Carpathia's general assembly closed a chapter in the club's long history on February 22, when it voted 75 - 45 in favor of ending the annual Volksfest at Freedom Hill County Park. This vote followed a similar one on the board just weeks prior to the general meeting.

What was the driving force behind the decision? Lack of volunteers to help work the fest, especially during setup, tear down, clean up, and re-storage. Long time bar manager and festival organizer, Joe Mayer, underscored the problem at the meeting when, just before the vote, he took the microphone saying, "Anybody who votes yes (to continue the festival), write your phone number down so we know who to call to help!"

Actually, the decision to end the Freedom Hill festival comes as no real surprise. In 2000, Friday was cut from the weekend-long event to help ease the workload on the volunteers. Apparently, this proved only to postpone the inevitable. For some years now, the Carpathia faithful, most of whom had been working the Volksfest since its beginning in 1976, have been grumbling: "too much work" and "always the same people" and "we're gettin' too old!"

The high level of commitment demonstrated by club members like Joe Mayer, Steve Homann, and others is not to be repeated in subsequent generations. These men went so far as to take vacation time from work in order to help at the Volksfest. As this generation has grown older and less able to help, festival organizers have been increasingly frustrated trying to put on a major event with the apparent lack of commitment by younger generations of club members.

The annual summer Volksfest was begun in 1976 as the brainchild of Carpathia President Jakob Schneider. Schneider organized club members and worked with the management of the brand new Freedom Hill County Park. The first festival was under a tent when the park was nothing more than a grassy field. Club members constructed a dance floor from 2 x 4's and plywood, which was disassembled and stored each year. Carpathia even rented the dance floor on occasion to other organizations hosting picnics at the park.

Carpathia members also built booths for serving food and drinks and a stage, none of which was available at Freedom Hill. As with the dance floor, the booths were constructed to be disassembled at the end of the festival and stored until the following season. For years, everyone at Freedom Hill used the stage

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