

At tradition's core

Alpenfest's 25 years showcase Alpine Village spirit

Twenty-five years ago the first floats with chalet style architecture rolled down Main Street and a popular Gaylord tradition was born.

Now, Alpenfest, Inc. is a special arm of the Gaylord / Otsego County Chamber of Commerce.

Alpenfest has come a long way since its first showing in 1965 as the Alpine Festival.

Now two blocks of Main Street are transformed into the Alpenstrasse every third week in July and thousands of people turn out for the annual event.

Some ideas have been with the festival from the start, such as having the Alpenstrasse and a queen, while others, like the grand parade and the naming of der Buergermeister, have come along as the festival has grown in popularity.

A budget of about \$2,400 for the first festival is easily eclipsed by the \$30,000 annual budget now in place for the festival.

The big festival has such a low budget because of the number of



The bad guy everyone loves to hate, Herr Gessler's become a true symbol of Alpenfest, whose head-

quarters are maintained in the Gaylord / Otsego County Chamber of Commerce building.

volunteers who make up the Alpenfest workforce.

Over 5,000 volunteers have been involved with the festival in the 25 years since a group of local businessmen came up with the idea for the festival.

Jim Mongeau serves as general manager of the festival and Andy Driver is the president.

Bill Wishart and Paul

Beachnau, executive directors of the Gaylord / Otsego County Chamber of Commerce and the Gaylord Area Convention and Tourism Bureau, respectively, serve on the board of Alpenfest directors.

Persons interested in learning more about becoming an Alpenfest volunteer may contact the chamber at 732-4000.

This Page Courtesy Of

Carter's Food Center

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