



Chautauqua Grand Marshall

In years past, the Wythe Arts Council has honored a person or persons for their contribution to the Chautauqua Festival by naming them the parade grand marshal. This 26th year of the festival will be no exception. However, instead of the honor going to an individual, an organization is being recognized for their contributions. The Wytheville Moose Lodge has generously given their support to the festival for many years. In one way or another, this group has touched the lives of most of the citizens in Wytheville and Wythe County. Most people in our area are not aware of the organization's generous use of their time and funds.

For the Wythe Arts Council, the Wytheville Moose Lodge has been a faithful Oscar sponsor. They have organized and conducted several bingo games as fundraisers and volunteered the use of their facilities for various other festival fundraisers. Indeed, they have been influential in the success of the festival.

At the same time, their generosity has been felt in both the national and local levels. The members of the Moose help to support a retirement facility for their members as well as a home for children of Moose members that have lost their parents. These children are cared for and educated by donations from the various Moose organizations. Not only do the Moose care for the children affiliated with their organization but substantial donations are made each year to the Shriner's Childrens Hospital.

On the local level, each year a sizable monetary donation is given to each rescue squad in Wythe County and to all the fire departments in both Wytheville and Wythe County. The group has provided funds to help build playgrounds for our youth; sponsored coloring contests in the elementary schools, helped in supporting after prom parties for area high schools, and offered the use of their building to schools, churches, and Relay for Life fundraising activities. The Wytheville Moose Lodge is also a major donator to United Way and Mount Rogers camps and activities. Each Christmas the Moose help the Department of Social Services with the Santa Workshop program. Heavenly Angels, one of our newest organizations, has also received help from the local Moose. The most recent activity for the Wytheville Moose Lodge was purchasing and preparing a steak dinner for the 450-plus riders in Run for the Wall.

Helping the Moose with many of their activities as well as working on additional interests is the women's organization, Women of the Moose-Wytheville Chapter 2345. This organization was chartered in 2007 and although relatively new has also made many contributions to our community. By having the two groups, the citizens of our area can better be served.

The funds for the services of the Wytheville Moose are raised through the bingo games held at the lodge each Sunday afternoon. These games are open to the public. The members volunteer their time to conduct the games which raise the revenue for the various donations. So, as the members of the Wytheville Moose Lodge 394 lead the parade on Saturday, June 19, be sure to give them a well deserved cheer for the hard work they do for the residents of Wytheville and Wythe County.