

For Immediate Release - "2008 Smith Mountain Lake Fireworks Display"

Note to Editor: *In an effort to prevent incorrect information about this event from being circulated, please disregard any information you may receive regarding fireworks at Smith Mountain Lake unless it is submitted by either Parkway Marina or the Saunders Vol. Fire Co. Furthermore, please note that the "no-wake" promotion is not affiliated with the fireworks display nor have we provided any information or quotes to be used in articles related to it.*

"The 2008 Smith Mountain Lake Fireworks Display (That Almost Wasn't)"

Each year, the Saunders Volunteer Fire Company spends hundreds, if not thousands, of man-hours organizing what has become a tradition at Smith Mountain Lake - the annual Independence Day fireworks display at Parkway Marina - officially titled "*The Smith Mountain Lake Fireworks and Fire Company Fundraiser*". Members of the fire company spend most of their time planning activities, planning parking and logistics, and, of course, figuring how to raise much needed funds. "*Over the last few months we've spent much of our cash reserves fighting several area fires, but we still have bills to pay*" stated Mike Wachter, treasurer of the fire company.

As with the fire company's operating expenses, the demands for organizing this ever-more-popular event continue to increase. Approximately 3,500 people attended the 2007 event at the marina and the DGIF estimated about the same number of boats were out for the fireworks. Yet, the donations haven't kept pace. "*We seriously considered not continuing our participation in the event after 2007*" explained Wachter, "*Mainly, we do it because we enjoy the event just like the rest of our community. We want the fireworks to continue, but it takes a lot of time and the relatively few donations hardly justify the time expended, especially when our resources are already spread so thin.*"

Parkway Marina first held the event in 1991. It was a small gathering of friends, customers and neighbors. "*You knew just about everyone there. We wanted to put on a good show for them*" stated James Clayton, the manager of the marina. In 1998, the owner of the marina passed away. A friend, Buzzy Coleman, approached the family about carrying-on the event in his memory and helped put together the funds to keep the event going. By 2001, the event had become so popular that the marina staff simply couldn't handle the parking and crowds anymore. "*That's when we reached out to several organizations for help. In return, we gave them the opportunity to make the event a fundraiser. The fire company 'came to the rescue', and has been organizing the event as a fundraiser since then*" explained Clayton.

This year's event will be on Saturday, July 5th starting at 5:30 pm with music by The Worx. There will be numerous activities on site including a car show, food and beverage vendors and Parkway's famous 1954 Carousel. The fire company is planning for more activities this year, which they hope will help generate additional revenue.

Without the fire co, Clayton says the marina would not be able to host this event, "*The July 4th holiday is the busiest time of the year for us, even without the fireworks.*" He estimated that tens of thousands observe the event by land and water, but understands that only a few have actually donated to the fire company. Unless donations improve this year, the fire co will be forced to once again question if the fireworks should continue. The fire company has provided several ways to donate, including by mail and online at SMLFireworks.org. Business can also sponsor the event, including the possibility of a title sponsorship. According to Wachter "*The fire company feels that this tremendous opportunity for sponsors. There is no other event on Smith Mountain Lake that draws this much attention.*"

Location: Parkway Marina on Smith Mtn. Lake, VA

Date: Saturday, July 5th 2008

Time: 5:30 pm

Web: www.SMLFireworks.org

Contact: James Clayton of Parkway Marina at (540) 297-4412

Admissions: No Individual Admissions Fee. However, a parking fee is applied for each car. Please Consider Car Pooling!