

COMMENTARY

A peek behind the scenes at Mardi Gras

Well, there sure were a bunch of really nice people who missed the early Mass yesterday morning. What an eventful Mardi Gras celebration! I don't usually like to gossip, but I thought you might be interested to hear "the story behind the story" on some of Saturday's activities.

The Children's Mardi Gras ball at St. Ann's went off without a



Dave Richards

hitch, with a "well done" going out to Sue Bernier, Louise Champigny and their crew. I did not see it myself as I was at the Lincoln Mall with the Lincoln Lions

broadcasting their always successful Radio Lion program. When that was over, I rushed back to Woonsocket, where I was scheduled to meet Helen Nichols, King Jace, and the Queen and her court at the Elks. That's when things got interesting.

I had just changed into my jester costume and was about to eat supper when Sue Tessier MacKenzie (who is probably still on oxygen today) came into the lounge with a look on her face I will never forget. She came directly to me and said, "I need you" in a way that told me she meant business. She said one of the emcees hadn't shown up and she needed me to fill in as an emcee. "Of course," I said, as I quickly gathered my things, and as I put on my coat I asked, "Where am I going?" Sue said, "CYO." Not taking time to think, I asked her, "Who was supposed to be there?" She looked at me and just winked. Then it hit me. The CYO location had been my beat for years, but when I gave it up to be with King Jace this year, Roger Bouchard had taken it.

Still in motion, and grabbing the hanger my costume had been brought in on, I said to Sue, "But Roger has been the number one guess for King Jace!" Sue winked at me again. And off I went to the CYO Center. It was nice being back at the CYO with site coordinators Sharon Charette and Bert Cayer. It's the largest and happiest of the Mardi Gras venues, I think. Thanks go to Bert, who filled in as emcee during the time it took us all to realize that Roger was otherwise occupied. Well done, Bert!

Big evenings like our Mardi Gras have their highs and their lows. A definite "low" was the unfortunate death of one of our revelers while riding on a shuttle bus. The 61-year-old man, a member of the St. Anthony's Chorale, was changing venues with other members of the chorale and their director, Noel Pincince, gaily singing and laughing and enjoying themselves when God called him home suddenly and without notice. This, of course, can have no reflection on the Mardi Gras itself. And I certainly don't mean to sound trite when I say, you never know when your work is done on this Earth, so be ready at all times, but enjoy yourself, in moderation, at every opportunity. Our sincere condolences to his wife and family. And to the chorale, as well.

Before I go, I want to mention how happy I was to see the outpouring of support for Sue Bernier on her sixth anniversary French program. Well done, Sue!

And more thanks to Gene Cloutier and Flo Bourget for their help this past week. Remember, folks, the Autumnfest Steering Committee is sponsoring a family breakfast this Sunday at the Club Par-X, Stanley Avenue in Woonsocket. Don't try to park near the club, though. Your thoughtful hosts have reserved parking for you at the Woonsocket High School on Cass Avenue and a speedy little shuttle bus will whisk you from your car to the club and back. Lots of prizes, the usual hearty Par-X-cellent breakfast, and tickets are only six bucks. I have mine and a few extras for you. By the way guys, I like my eggs ... well done!

One last thing — I had a blast last Monday in Mrs. Mayer's class at the Citizens Memorial Elementary School. I thank them also for the swell gift.

Thanks for reading.

Dave Richards is the station manager of 1240 WOON-AM Radio.