



# ROTARY NOTARY

## Birthdays:

Marc Campbell

4/23

## At Rotary Today:

**Greeter:** Kevin Rathert

**Invocation, Flag Salute,  
and Four-way test:**  
Kevin Rathert

**Special Guests:**  
Dean Ellingson  
Jeff Gaona  
Heidi Hurtig

## You Heard It Here First:

Terry Wiggers, when introducing his wife, Wendy Johnson, this year's Windwagon Smith, acknowledged, "Yes, I did marry up."

## Quote of the Week:

Become the kind of leader that people would follow voluntarily, even if you had no title or position.

—Brian Tracy

## WICHITA RIVERFEST: NINE DAZZLING DAYS OF FOOD, FUN AND FAVES



Wendy Johnson is Admiral Windwagon Smith 44. She's flanked by her husband, Terry Wiggers, a member of EWR, and Mary Beth Jarvis, President and CEO of Wichita Festivals, Inc. since 2012 and a member of Downtown Wichita Rotary.

Can you imagine summer without the Wichita Riverfest? Neither can we. This year's 46th annual Festival is from June 2—10 and promises a spectacular array of events that will appeal to guests of all ages.

One of the biggest concerns in recent years has been safety. CEO of Wichita Festivals, Mary Beth Jarvis, explained that security issues have been addressed by creating enclosed spaces where attendees must wear a button to enter. Security has been increased in those enclosed areas, where

guests are checked for weapons before entering.

The Riverfest has evolved greatly during its history, which began as a result of the Wichitennial celebration to celebrate our city's 100th birthday in 1970. Just as today, the focus was to bring people together, build community pride, and focus on the tremendous resource that is the Arkansas River.

A not-for-profit corporation formed the following year and in 1972 the first Wichitennial River Festival took place in downtown

Wichita. Attendees purchased approximately 2,000 buttons for a dollar apiece.

The story of Admiral Windwagon Smith sailing across the Kansas prairie on a ship with wheels was based on a little-known Disney cartoon film. Every year since the legend's creation in 1974, a community leader with a history of service to the Riverfest has served as the face of the event, making special appearances at schools, businesses, and community service organizations during the months leading to the festival. (*cont'd on p. 2*)

**Dates for Your Calendar:**

**Tuesday, April 25**—April mixer at The Blarney Stone, 21st and Woodlawn in Brittany Center. Enjoy adult beverages and snacks with your fellow Rotarians. Bring a spouse or a BFF! The gathering begins at 5:15 p.m.

**Saturday, May 6**—Kentucky Derby Party at the Lux from 3:00—6:30 pm. Bring yourself, your spouse, a friend! Lots of good fun and terrific auction items you can't find anywhere else!

**Wednesday, May 17**—Lord's Diner Service Project

**Friday, June 2 and Monday, June 5**—EWR will staff booths for Riverfest food court ticket sales. This is a great service project and lots of fun!

**Sign Up to be a Greeter or Invocation Leader:**

If every member of our club signed up once a year to either greet or lead the invocation/flag salute/four-way test, we'd have it covered.

**Next Week:**

John Tomblin, Ph.D., Executive Director of the National Institute of Aviation Research at WSU's Innovation Campus will be our featured speaker.

**WICHITA RIVERFEST (CONT'D)**

While you're sipping a glass of wine or savoring a funnel cake in the always popular Food Court, you may not be thinking about the economic impact that your purchases are having on the city. The most recent calculations show that the Riverfest has an economic impact of \$25—\$30 million annually. In 2016 Riverfest had 455,000 attendees, an 11% increase from 2015. In addition, more than 101,000 buttons were sold, putting the Riverfest in the top 40 of ticket sales at outdoor events worldwide, according to Pollstar.

Riverfest is a magnet for out-of-town guests. On weekdays the crowd hails mostly from Wichita and Sedgwick County. But on weekends thousands of visitors come from all over Kansas, as well as neighboring states.

How does an organization with only nine full-time and one part-time staff pull off the city's biggest party? It's the volunteers. All 7,000 of them. And let's not forget the sponsors. Nearly 250 sponsorship partners provide \$850,000 in cash sponsorships, along with an equal amount of in-kind support.

There's lots to see and do this year, brand-new events as well as returning favorites. From now through May 4 you can purchase buttons for the early-bird price of \$7 for adults, and \$3 for children ages 6—12 at Cox Solution Stores. Come on down and have some fun at the river!

**SAVE \$50,450 BY ATTENDING EWR'S "RUN FOR THE ROSES" PARTY**

The special event committee that is putting together our Kentucky Derby party is hard at work creating a fun, memorable event to help EWR fund three local not-for-profits. Committee member Tammie Rhea gave Rotarians the best reasons EVER to come to the first annual "Run for the Roses" Kentucky Derby party on Saturday, May 6.

First, it costs \$25,000 to enter a horse in the Derby and another \$25,000 if the horse is selected for the starting gate. Second, it's about \$500 to purchase a good seat for viewing. By purchasing a \$50 ticket and attending our event instead, you'll save \$50,450. Pretty good deal, right?

**ABOUT THIS YEAR'S WINDWAGON SMITH**

Wendy Johnson is only the second female to serve as the ceremonial head of festival activities. The first female admiral was Jimmie's Diner owner Linda Davidson in 1999.

Wendy is the division director of marketing and communications for the Wichita Public Schools, a position she has held since 2001. A graduate of WSU with bachelors and masters degrees, she's a proud Shocker fan who has also adopted the K-State Wildcats during football season.

The belt on her Windwagon Smith ensemble was handcrafted especially for her and bears a replica of the Wichita flag. And her shoes? Saddle oxfords she found online. "They're the most comfortable shoes I've ever worn," she confided.



Wendy Johnson visits with a child she met on one of her many community outreach events. Her position with the Wichita Public Schools makes her feel like she's Mom to the 50,000 students in the district.