

A Very Merry Weekend

Christmas in Springboro festival celebrates its 31st year in 2017

BY HALEY JENA

Joyous songs play softly in the background. Tens of thousands of people can be heard laughing and talking. Jingle bells are never far away and spirit is never low—the event you might wonder? It's the largest three-day holiday festival in Ohio, Christmas in Historic Springboro.

This year, the 31st annual holiday festival kicks off Friday, Nov. 7, at Main St. in downtown historic Springboro and lasts all weekend long. This year's theme is "Riding the Polar Express" and is free for everyone to enjoy.

Such a pleasant yet extensive event takes months of preparation. "We meet once a month until mid-October when we start meeting once a week all the way up to the festival," says Wendell Weimer, president of the festival committee. The committee is composed of several treasurers, a secretary, a PR consultant and many more staff members.

The team works months in advance to set up all the parts of the festival, which is always conducted right around Thanksgiving. Highlights of the event include food and craft tents, a 5K fun run and, of course, the crowd-favorite parade.

"The atmosphere is so fun," Weimer says. "The parade always packs the streets. It's definitely the event with the highest attendance that weekend. Sometimes I walk up and down the street during the parade, and



ABOVE: Horse-drawn wagons transport festival-goers down Main Street.

RIGHT: Festival attendees can shop at more than 80 vendors during the Christmas in Historic Springboro holiday festival.

it's all 'oohs' and 'aahs' from those watching which is a really cool thing to hear and enjoy."

Weimer says this enormous parade contains around 85 to 90 floats, with everything from "little girls from dance studios to horses to guys in old-fashioned tractors to police officers and firefighters and churches and Santa Claus and more." This eclectic entertainment lasts about an hour and will start at noon on Saturday.

Besides the parade, attendants can enjoy four big craft tents, featuring approximately 80 vendors. Additionally, there are over 30 food vendors, hailing from all around the world—"One guy comes all the way from Greece!"—who will supply the street with delicious treats for the crowd, with everything from "apples to fried zucchini," Weimer says. And the event is fun for the whole family—there's a kid's entertainment tent bursting with activities, from crafts to puppet shows to a magician.

While the weekend is filled with holiday amusement, the effect of the festival lasts



longer than the duration of the weekend for some families.

"This is a non-profit festival," Weimer says. "So we give the proceeds to Operation Santa and to the Springboro community. After we pay all of the bills (for the festival), we find a couple needy families in the area and buy them clothes, food and more. It's great to see the effect of those donations for some families."

Clearly, this joyous festival warms the heart in more ways than one.

The Christmas in Historic Springboro Festival will be conducted Nov. 17-19 at Main Street in Springboro; times are F 6-10 p.m., Sa 10 a.m.-10 p.m. and Su 12-5 p.m. For any questions, go to springborofestivals.org. ■