Virtual Welcome 2020

In any other year, this Welcome would be a greeting to you upon entering Goodale Park, a physical space that has been ComFest’s home for almost three decades. But this isn’t any other year.

It’s a year of what happened and what didn’t happen, of pandemic, uncertainty, lockdowns, and social distancing. A year of cancelled or diminished arts events, concerts, worship services, athletic competitions, conventions, graduation ceremonies, weddings, memorial services. Another year of a president who is the embodiment of 1984’s Newspeak. Another year of those in charge of the federal government continuing their assaults on democracy. A year that has filled the streets with angry protests against police violence and racism.

Nonetheless, welcome to 2020’s virtual ComFest.

Since 1972’s original Community Festival, the concept of community has been central to this annual celebration. The small group of artists, craftspeople, political activists, small businesspeople, and musicians who organized that first festival on 16th Avenue in 1972 had, over a number of years, developed a counter-culture supporting alternative lifestyles that rejected militarism and consumer culture, nurtured collective effort, and supported liberation movements here and abroad. They hoped to enlarge the word community beyond description of a physical, geographic space to a psychological space that offered a different way of relating to each other and the world.

This year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, we exist largely in virtual spaces. Faced with science-based evidence of an invisible health threat, we’ve withdrawn into our homes, begun wearing masks to protect each other when we’re in public places, communicated with friends and family online, and in some cases worked from home to reduce the possibility of infection. We’ve largely accepted the necessary limitations on what we casually called “normal life.”

Yes, there have been trolls and tools and TrumPutins and Tweeters sowing lies, disinformation, and misinformation as part of the right-wing assault on concepts of reality such as facts, evidence, and truth. Some of them are purveyors of ideas that reject the central element of being a community: people can depend on each other. These believers in rugged individualism hold that freedom means not having to be concerned about the well-being of other people.

ComFest rejects this philosophy. Its Statement of Principles outlines beliefs that are a framework for a community that values equality, sharing, empathy, and mutual responsibility (see page5). We are responsible for each other and the world we’re infinitesimal parts of. Period.

So this year the connections made and reinforced in Goodale Park each summer are happening virtually. We’re occupying different physical spaces, like the tens of thousands of people in the streets of
cities across the U.S. to protest the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police and the in-your-face video evidence of the country’s prolonged, systemic racism it revealed to white America.

We always exist on multiple planes: the physical world, our conscious and subconscious perceptions of it, our sense of the divine or supernatural, our aspirations, our emotions and imaginations, the individual and the collective. These are largely highly individualized but also shared and to some extent cohesive.

ComFest has existed in a space that its detractors describe as “stuck in the 60s.” Yet, although activists have made progress in what poet Langston Hughes called making “America be America,” the issues of racial and economic inequality, worker protections, LGBTQ rights, and environmental protection have not disappeared over the nearly 50 years of ComFest’s existence; in fact, the deep roots of these problems have become more evident. If you want social change, you better be in it for the long haul.

As the Democrats have failed to support working people and become dependent on Wall Street donors while Republicans have conducted a 40-year counter-revolution to destroy what progress had been made, the conditions that generated the cataclysmic upheavals of the 60s and 70s simmered below the surface.

We are living in a critical moment. Young climate-change activist Greta Thunberg’s frank address to the powers-that-be has re-energized pressure on governments to deal with global climate change. Around the world, the killing of George Floyd and others has ignited ongoing demonstrations against police violence and the militarization of safety forces. The Trump administration’s routine lies and incompetent, nothing-to-see-here response to the coronavirus pandemic illustrate how once again the poor and people of color shoulder the profound consequences of political corruption. Current conditions echo how black, brown, and poor people bore the Vietnam war’s costs in lives and money, and how politicians lied to the American people about “body counts” and “successes” as the conflict dragged on.

Although the Goodale Park event had to be cancelled, ComFest’s General Planning Committee has worked hard to maintain the spirit that has driven ComFest since its beginning. This virtual festival includes music, vendors, and live-streamed performances as well as speakers and workshops on vital issues. Take a leisurely stroll through this virtual festival with close friends, keeping in mind that everybody else matters as much as you do.


—Steve Abbott
COMMUNITY FESTIVAL
STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Community Festival is guided by its Principles. The Principles are statements of what the members believe is basically important. They are:

- We think that people ought to work for the collective good of all people rather than for personal gain.
- We support cooperation and collective activity rather than competition and individual profit.
- The basic necessities of life are a right and not a privilege.
- People have the collective right to control the conditions of their lives.
- People should strive to conduct their lives in harmony with the environment.
- We recognize that there are primary attitudes that divide and oppress people.
  These attitudes are usually shown by prejudice against people on the basis of age, class, ability, income, race, sex and sexual preference/orientation.

We seek to eliminate these attitudes.

The Statement of Principles is more important than any other writings of the Community Festival.

COMMUNITY FESTIVAL MISSION STATEMENT

The Community Festival is an independent, volunteer-organized celebration of creativity and activism in Columbus, OH. Founded in 1972. Its purpose is to build bridges between progressive non-profit organizations, artists, and volunteers to raise awareness and promote action within our community. Everything we do is guided by our principles which promote community unity, tolerance, and equity.

We will strive to realize this mission through the fulfillment of the following Organizational Goals:

- Building community bridges and nurturing collaboration through safe, peaceful, sustainable practices
- Initiating opportunities for community involvement and activism including information and workshops at the festival, non-profit networking and communication
- Promoting a more unified, tolerant, and equitable community
- Showcasing and celebrating Columbus and Central Ohio artists, craftspeople, musicians, activists and community organizations
ComFest 365

Community Festival is a non-profit organization run by volunteers who work year-round through committees and general meetings to produce the festival each June. We welcome new members and new ideas. We make decisions based on a consensus model grounded in our core principles and code of regulations. You can learn more by visiting us on the web at comfest.com and our Community Festival Facebook page.

Community Festival looks easier than it really is. More than three dozen organizers work on it all year when nobody’s looking. Each autumn, festival organizers host a planning retreat to work on improving the festival and strengthening community relations.

In early March each year, Community Festival sponsors a logo contest that attracts creative individuals who share their artistic talents hoping their winning design will grace volunteer T-shirts, beer mugs and the Program Guide cover. The contest brings people together and helps celebrate the local arts community.

In early May – except this year – the annual membership meeting attracts organizers, volunteers and community organization representatives. We gather for a meal, conversation, a bit of business, and conclude with the most rewarding thing we get to do each year: distribute grants to support worthy innovative programs of local community organizations.

Involvement in community projects and other city events is how ComFesters promote the spirit of the organization throughout the year.

Today’s organizers are the beneficiaries of many decades of planning and momentum, but there is always room for new volunteers ready to take the next step, from working at the festival to joining a committee and making ComFest something you do rather than simply attend.

This year has been a challenge for everyone. Comfest was faced with making the difficult but correct decision to cancel the traditional Goodale Park festival. This led to many online meetings to decide how best to keep the spirit of ComFest alive as a virtual experience. The photo shows how we have been meeting recently.

Hopefully 2021 will give us the opportunity to resume the party with a purpose in Goodale Park with proper public health concerns addressed.

Maybe this is your year to step up and put your talents to work in helping to produce the city’s best annual festival. Why not surprise yourself?

— ComFest Program Staff

MEETING SCHEDULE

For meeting location, dates and times: www.comfest.com

2021 COMMUNITY FESTIVAL: JUNE 25, 26 & 27
ComFest In The Era of Covid-19 and George Floyd

This has been a tumultuous year. The Community Festival community has lost two original ComFesters (Margret Sarber-Nie and Burt Cantrell) and two long-time peace and justice activists (Les Stansbury and Cindy Strauss). At the same time all of us are reeling from the effects of COVID-19 and the stunning murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks and George Floyd.

There may never have been a time when ComFest was more needed. The community needs ComFest but it is not there in person this year for everyone to congregate, discuss and heal together.

We who believe in freedom cannot rest
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes

During the Civil Rights movement one of the great champions for community leadership was Ella Baker and those are her words. (https://ellabakercenter.org/about/who-was-ella-baker). They come from a musical piece called Ella’s Song by Bernice Johnson Reagan. Ella Baker’s vision of the world in this song will help guide all of us to some greater understanding of the world we want to live in.

Com Fest was started at a time of crisis in 1972. The war in IndoChina, the emergence of the counter-culture and the arrest of some of the ComFest’s organizers on the very day of the Festival. The festival was born out of struggle and is meant to be an expression of the community. ComFest has stayed true to its community roots.

As the festival grew bigger it was faced with many obstacles: the need to hire police to guard the festival, moving to the Short North, the burning of the Northside Community Center, the death of original ComFester Libby Gregory in a plane accident, the changing nature of the Short North. When the early Pride marches needed a safe place to congregate, ComFest became the starting point for the parade.

But ComFest survived each challenge and grew stronger. Forty eight years later we are largest free, urban, multi-day, expressly political, volunteer-run festival in the country. This is just one sign of the vibrant progressive community in Columbus.

That which touches me most, Is that I had a chance to work with people Passing on to others that which was passed on to me

This year, Covid-19 hit and there became a new community, ComFest eagerly joined. A community willing to sacrifice so that others in the community could also survive. The unity shown among allies and enemies was more than heartening it had the potential to be game changing.

As time has gone on that unity has weakened as individuals demanded that having their nails done or getting a haircut was more important that protecting those in the community who could not protect themselves.

Not needing to clutch for power, not needing the light just to shine on me
I need to be just one in the number as we stand against tyranny

Then on May 25, a police officer aided by other police, stepped on the neck of George Floyd and murdered him. An anti-racist community arose. Wearing
facemarks and trying as best as they could in crowds, to socially distance, millions came forward to demand an end to police brutality. The community grew night by night and took up the larger issue of systemic racism with a passion and a fury not seen since the civil rights era.

*Until the killing of Black men, Black mothers’ sons
Is as important as the killing of White men, White mothers’ sons*

Again allies and some enemies have joined hands to say “BASTA”, Enough. The age of systemic racism in this country must end and it must end now. The challenges ahead are monumental and it will not happen tomorrow but it starts now.

Only through an alliance which is multi-racial, without caring about a persons class status, sexuality, sexual orientation, physical or mental challenges, religion or where a person lives will all of us be able to throw off of the shackles of the old and build a better future for all.

*Struggling myself don’t mean a whole lot I come to realize
That teaching others to stand up and fight is the only way my struggle survive*

ComFest has always been a safe place for those in society who have been shunned, marginalized and ostracized.

It has been a struggle to get to this point but together there is a way forward. Together as a community.

*We who believe in freedom cannot rest
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes*

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6Uus--gFrc)

— Michael Weber

**Spirit & Purpose**

ComFest celebrates community in all its manifestations from business to art to community organizations.

Sometimes overshadowed by the celebration of great art, music, vendors, food, drink, the beautiful surroundings, reconnecting with friends, and great vibes, it is easy to lose sight of ComFest's Purpose. Sometimes it gets drowned out by the party. Guided by ComFest's Statement of Principles and Mission Statement (page5), The Spirit & Purpose (S&P) Committee aims to bring that purpose to the forefront, inserting it into every aspect of the Festival and determining how it is perceived by the public.

Some of the ways S&P achieves these goals:
- Selecting and developing purpose-driven content emphasizing the important current issues, annual theme and slogans.
- Supporting and coordinating with other festival committees to achieve message cohesion.
- Developing and nurturing ComFest relationships with community organizations, social leaders, and local artists.
- Selecting and scheduling the workshops and speakers.
- Overseeing the Peace & Healing Tent, Emcee Selection and Training, Stage Announcements, Art in the Park, Supervising the ComFest Museum, Coordinating Photographers & Videographers, Retreat Planning, The Awards Ceremony, ComFest Merchandise, ComFest 365, Future Planning and more.

Columbus is rich in talent that deserves to be showcased. A progressive environment fosters such talent and forward-thinking, making this a great community in which to live and thrive. Think about how you can get involved in activities related to your most important social concerns.

— Darryl Mendelson

*Spirit & Purpose Committee*

[https://www.comfest.com/virtual-workshops/](https://www.comfest.com/virtual-workshops/)
(with full workshop list and S&P channel schedule)
Principles In Action: Community Festival Grants

Community Festival established the grants program in the spirit of giving back to our community. Each year ComFest invites grant applications to support and sustain programming that demonstrates a commitment to ComFest’s principles which are rooted in community, social justice and progressive activism. Since 2006, ComFest has awarded over $320,000 in grants to local organizations.

This year, six organizations doing essential work in Central Ohio received ComFest grants:

**Food Not Bombs – Columbus** (FNB) is a non-violent direct action group dedicated to changing society so food becomes a person’s given right, rather than a “gift” to be begged for. FNB reclams food that would end up in a landfill and provides fresh produce, bread and prepared meal services.

The grant will enable acquisition of a walk-in cooler to expand safe refrigeration capacity allowing FNB to reclaim a greater quantity of food for persons in need.

Contact: Columbusfnb@gmail.com

**Summer Jam West** is an arts and music organization in the Hilltop neighborhood. Their annual festival features installation of permanent, public art as a gift to the community. The grant will support a commissioned mural to be painted at 3045 Sullivant Ave.

Local artists Michael Boudreault and Chris McDaniels (Artisan Rooms) will produce the mural. The design reflects the theme: “Color Your World Green” and depicts a "green goddess" dropping her veil of hair over a smog filled, industrialized area. The mural’s message is to protect and heal the earth.

Contact: patti@summerjamwest.org and www.summerjamwest.org/mural-2020/

**VoiceCorps Reading Service** is a radio reading service that enriches lives by reading printed news and information to people who are blind, have low vision, or other conditions that prevent reading. Oftentimes, these are men and women who have experienced vision loss late in life – after a lifetime of independent reading. The grant will support an awareness and outreach campaign to increase the number of persons served by VoiceCorps.

Contact: www.voicecorps.org and www.facebook.com/voicecorps

**Clintonville-Beechwold Community Resources Center (CRC)** has been working with those facing homelessness since 1971. CRC provides resources including food, clothing, warm blankets, housing referrals, assistance in applying for benefits, and more.

Community members ask what they can do when encountering someone who is homeless. In response, CRC developed the Community Homeless Kit Project. A kit includes essential personal care items and bus passes. ComFest’s grant will allow CRC to purchase supplies for 200 kits. The kits will be available for anyone in the community to pick up and hand out when they see someone living on the streets.

Contact: www.clintonvillecrc.org and www.facebook.com/ClintonvilleResourcesCenter/

**Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS)** – Survivor Support Services

The grant will assist ETSS in providing services for vulnerable populations escaping abusive relationships. Tragically, the majority of Central Ohio’s immigrant and refugee communities are isolated and often don’t understand the inner workings of social service support systems. Survivor Support bridges that disconnect by providing emergency services to immigrant and refugee survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. In 2019, ETSS Family Care served 83 primary victims and 187 secondary victims from 29 different countries.

Contact: www.ethiotss.org

**IMPACT Safety, a program of LifeCare Alliance**

Safe Bars 614 is a restaurant and bar intervention program that teaches staff how to intervene in sexual assault, harassment, and other disruptive behaviors they see occurring in their places of employment. Safe Bars 614 uses an innovative bystander intervention curriculum to empower participants to stand up against sexual harassment, sexual assault, and other acts of inappropriate behavior to increase safety and comfort in Franklin County bars and restaurants.

The grant will help market and publicize the training program, produce promotional materials to build interest in the program and achieve buy-in from restaurants and bars, primarily those located in the Short North area.

Contact: www.lifecarealliance.org/programs/impact-safety/safe-bars-614/

Community Festival congratulates the 2020 grants awardees. Visit comfest.com for details on how to apply for the 2021 grants program.

— Marty Stutz
While Columbus residents search for answers to questions about what role if any the police department ought to play in low-income and predominately minority communities, what non-violent approaches to public safety would look like, and how young people can channel their rage towards achieving change, 1DivineLine2Health (1DL2H) is a good organization to look to as an example of a non-profit that provides appropriate interventions to vulnerable populations where they are at.

1DL2H’s founder, Esther Flores, was raised by a Spanish speaking Puerto Rican mother in a 12th floor apartment in the Bronx. During her early life, domestic violence was a normal routine after her father left. Countless acts of trauma and victimization followed through Esther’s young years at home and in her community. She grew up in fear and had to learn to fight, both abstractly and literally (she was and still is very small).

However, with faith and support of schoolteachers, she decided that she would only be able to escape the Bronx if she got an education, so she put herself through school and received a degree in forensic medicine from Lehman College and a nursing degree from the Ohio State.

During the early years of her career she worked at Columbus hospital and skilled-nursing facilities, but she gravitated towards working in free clinics who served immigrants, homeless and trafficking victims. She had an affinity for patients whose circumstances reminded her and her own community’s struggles accessing health care.

In 2015, fed up with the injustices she saw in the health care system, she founded 1DL2H. The organization is a non-profit that provides basic needs and access to health care to the most vulnerable populations in our city, especially the West Side. The area is known as the epicenter of human and drug trafficking, high infant mortality rate, lowest life expectancy, and highest eviction rate in Franklin County. It is filled with indigenous ethnic cultures where sexual violence is kept silent.

1DL2H is a mobile social service agency that is a true embodiment of the harm reduction and community-based model that many nonprofits tout but fail to achieve. They operate two safe houses in the Hilltop and Linden for survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence and in recovery. They conduct street outreach out of a red utility truck called the “Love Bug” that distributes food, clothes, and Narcan. Esther’s performs first aid and transports trafficking victims to recovery and hospitals. They are in the process of opening the first full-time Drop-In Center for trafficking victims in Franklin County.

1DL2H’s success comes from having no illusions about what is required to meaningfully advocate for the survivors they serve. Their work does not fit neatly into a campaign commercial or Facebook fundraiser. 1DL2H volunteers, led by Esther, are not afraid to build relationships with drug dealers and traffickers and immerse themselves in their world to make the work possible.

1DL2H believes this intimate immersion, motivated by an unwavering compassion for all people, is a critical component missing from most levels of city government and particularly the police department. When they enter a house used as a haven for drug and sex trafficking, they are not armed with a gun and a badge, but with Narcan and food. Their nonviolent strategy towards combating society’s failures allows them greater access and respect in the hardest to reach communities than a badge ever will.

As Esther watches young people from Columbus rise up against police violence and other systemic injustices, she shares their fury and sees her young self in their pain. She is reminded of this quote from her favorite freedom fighter, Pedro Albizu Campos, who was the first Puerto Rican to graduate from Harvard, “Young people have a duty to defend their country with weapons of knowledge.” She hopes that they can use her story as an example, find resilience through their pain, and see the movement that they are creating as a form of patriotism and that they bolster that movement through education, healing and practical solution to create safer and healthy neighborhoods.

— Graham Bowman
A wise old man once said, “There are decades when nothing happens; and there are weeks when decades happen.” Even he had no idea how fast change can come sometimes.

Looking back now at The Before Times — before the triple whammy of COVID-19 / economic collapse / popular uprising — it can be hard to remember how slowly the arc of history was bending toward justice only three months ago. But now streets all across America are full of protestors demanding justice, everything is in motion and suddenly it feels like together, nothing is impossible.

Already this movement has brought out an unprecedented number of marchers in the middle of a pandemic, in small towns and big cities, over and over and over again. By sheer refusal to back down the protestors are changing laws and minds, and giving heart to many allies isolated by COVID-19 who were unable to join in this outpouring of solidarity. The uprising has also undammed a tidal wave of art, which is the mark of a sustainable movement.

At the same time that the Black Lives Matter movement, the gun sense movement and the police accountability movement are marching in the street together, another national movement for change is making their voices heard in digital space. The Poor People’s Campaign National Call for Moral Revival moved its long-planned June 20 mass demonstration from Washington DC to online and CSPAN presentations, showcasing an impressive coalition of community, political advocacy and civil rights organizations, including very prominently trade unions and faith groups. The Poor People’s Campaign has put forward a comprehensive and detailed list of demands for economic and racial justice — and they have the network of deeply rooted local groups that can sustain such a bold campaign.

There are other indicators that this upheaval is more than just the annual spring outing for activists: Fundraising for bail funds for protestors, as well as all sorts of civil rights organizations, skyrocketed literally overnight, as hundreds of millions of dollars poured into national and local organizations that saw their funds increase tenfold or more. ActBlue, the donation hub for liberal and progressive causes, reported donations totaling $250 million in the first two weeks of June, including bringing in $41 million in just 24 hours. Similarly, organizations like Color of Change, the Marshall Center and Democratic Socialists of America have seen their membership numbers soar as the protests spread, with Color of Change growing from 1.7 million members to 7 million in just days.

Voter registration is also up significantly, as it becomes unavoidably obvious that the November election is an existential challenge for this country.

Thousands of young volunteers who had embraced Bernie Sanders’ broad agenda for change have continued to work to register and turn out voters, using the same sophisticated and effective grassroots techniques as demonstrated in that campaign, and that work got another big lift when LeBron James and Patrick Mahomes launched the “More than a Vote” project to fight vote suppression.

All of these movements coming to the fore at the same time is strong reason for hope in an otherwise dark moment. But all of this work needs still more hands, and stronger platforms. The most encouraging sign is that trade unions are stepping up: new organizing and strikes in workplaces from news organizations to gig economy networks, combined with solidarity actions like the Longshoremen’s shutdown of 29 west coast ports to protest police brutality, are putting organized labor back in the spotlight where it belongs. Unions are the strongest
ally any campaign for justice can hope for, so this renewed alliance portends even greater changes to come.

This focus on new union organizing and labor solidarity will become ever more important in the coming months. The US economy is undergoing one of the largest wealth transfers in history — and the money is flowing in the wrong direction.

Some of the worst effects of the pandemic shutdown are only now showing up: just as most laid-off workers’ unemployment comes to an end, there are millions of families whose electric and gas turn off notices were suspended; there are hundreds of thousands of foreclosures and rental evictions that have been on hold; there are tens of thousands of students who will not be able to return to college, much less pay their student debt; there are millions more who lost employer-subsidized health insurance when they lost their jobs. And any of those families unlucky enough to have been hit by COVID-19 are facing astronomical hospital bills.

No wonder people are raging in the streets.

Yet despite the sheer size of the current uprising and the very real gains already won, there’s no guarantee this new movement for racial and economic justice will succeed in taking full advantage of what all agree is a major political and cultural inflection point. How many times in just the past decade have pundits decreed that This Will Change Everything?

There are critical choices to be made now by the leaders and participants in these mass movements, one of which in particular could decide whether this inflection point is truly a tipping point. A conscious strategy of building coalition across many constituencies should be top priority, but there are some sectors of the progressive movement still fearful that uniting will cost them control of their brand, or access to donors, or credibility, or something. But at this point there is no real way forward except together. It has never been so clear, to so many people, that racism, poverty and violence are inextricably connected and can only be eliminated by uprooting the systems and institutions that allow these plagues to run rampant. We really are all in this together.

That’s where the active participation of individuals is key — not just by marching in the streets, but every day, as members and supporters of organizations that prioritize coalition. With COVID-19 still keeping many people at home, the power of old-fashioned organizing is potentially decisive. Using phone calls, teleconferences and letter writing, this reserve army of the poor and working class can raise and amplify the demands for justice: End the militarization of police and break the malignant power of the police unions. Institute debt relief and ensure a universal basic income. Enact Medicare for All. Defend and extend voting rights. Disband ICE and create fair immigration policies. End the use of fossil fuels, fast-track development of renewable energy sources and put the climate emergency at the top of every agenda going forward.

Of all of these, most urgent is the call to make elections accessible and fair. The roots of the current crises are deep and ancient, but right now the most strategic remedy is to remove from the White House what one scholar of authoritarian regimes has accurately labeled “a transnational crime syndicate masquerading as a government”. Those bad actors are by now on the defensive, but being cornered only makes them more dangerous.

If the different strands of the movement for justice are ever going to agree on one thing, it has to be this: mobilizing the rage and creative energy unleashed in this moment to Get Out The Vote. Only a landslide rejection of the current administration will be enough to secure a new foundation for democracy in this country.

There are real challenges to unity. The global rise of the authoritarian right requires that the left and progressive movements will need to get out of their own way, abandoning a style of work that in recent years has confused differences among allies with splitting differences. Labeling, excluding and deplatforming activists who don’t share the majority view is a recipe for failure. Only principled struggle can forge the solidarity needed to build a coalition big enough to wield real power. Young activists, who were the majority of those who turned out in the streets to demand racial justice, need to acknowledge that previous generations’ strategies and organizations did not fail but were defeated. Older activists need to welcome new leaders and make collaboration real, demonstrating that we make the road to unity by walking together.

This next period will not always move as fast as this spring, but with commitment and persistence and unity the cause of economic and racial justice, as well as the preservation of our planet, can be accomplished. As teen climate activist Greta Thunberg said recently, “Doing our best is no longer good enough. We must now do the seemingly impossible.”

The people are ready. Trust the people.

— Mimi Morris
Bill Kurzenberger arrived in Columbus in 1994 and attended his first ComFest in 1995. As a musician, Bill played his first ComFest in 2001 and has performed at one stage or another since then with a variety of bands. He was approached by Lee Bass a couple of years later and asked to volunteer. And what a volunteer he has become!

Since 2005 Bill has been stage crew and stage manager for both Bozo and Gazebo stages, as well as stage supervisor and stage head for the Gazebo stage. Pretty head-y stuff, right? But he has done more; joining the Tech committee in 2019 and this year becoming the Director of Virtual ComFest – though he prefers the term facilitator. It is that thought that brings us to the heart of why Bill is an honored volunteer - his connection and commitment to ComFest and “the synergy that is attainable when taking the ‘I’ out of the equation” speaks to exactly who Bill is and why he works so hard to bring the Community Festival to life.

To talk to Bill about ComFest is to be invited to view the festival through joyful eyes. His excitement is contagious. Bill believes in the Statement of Principles and strives to help others see what can be done to improve our community simply by living by these principles. One of his favorite quotes is from Gene Rodenberry “the needs of the many out weighs the needs of the few.” Bill believes that ComFest is the embodiment of that philosophy and that “all time spent on the festival is valuable and reinforces the community and philosophy of selflessness.”

His commitment to ComFest is evidenced by his desire to put on a Virtual ComFest in this pandemic year. After learning that he had been nominated as an honored volunteer, Bill dedicated himself fully to creating the first Virtual festival. He felt this is his way to give back the honor to the people.

Bill always talks about the Community Festival in the female. He feels that ComFest is the “Daughter of Mother Earth” and an earth natural event. Those that attend have the “opportunity to break the bubble from the inside and experience different cultures, opinion, music, community organizations and workshops.” He feels that the “cultural variety” is one of the things that makes ComFest unique. According to Bill we should “Live everyday the ComFest way.”

— Kitty Horan

HOW TO APPLY

Would you like to entertain, perform, demonstrate, teach, or give a workshop at Community Festival?

Go to comfest.com and fill out a performer application, which will be available online for ComFest 2021 on July 1, 2020.

The deadline to return them is March 15, 2021.

Earlier application gives us more time to get to know you or check out your performance.
Jen Miller has a voice— and she uses it to bring people together. As Executive Director of League of Women Voters of Ohio, she works tirelessly as a nonpartisan advocate to engage diverse voices in the political process. “My job is to stand up for every voter in Ohio,” says Miller, who encourages Ohioans to vote and become advocates on the issues they care about.

“The most sacred part of my work is defending democracy itself,” she says. Miller works to protect all people—including individuals with disabilities, new citizens, and people who do not have access to reliable transportation. “My job is to think about every voter and make sure that they have access to the ballot and make sure that voting systems are secure and fair,” Jen says.

Prior to her current role, Miller was Executive Director of Sierra Club Ohio, and she continues to support environmental protections for Ohio’s public lands and serves many diverse organizations and committees, including Ohio’s 19th Amendment Centennial Commission.

Since college, Jen has worked extensively with the Native American community to bring awareness to social justice issues and Indigenous rights. Miller earned Bachelor’s degrees in Vocal Music and History and Ethnic Studies at Capital University and began to advocate for the protection of Columbus Native American sacred lands.

Shelly Corbin, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, met Miller at a 2016 rally protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline at Ohio State University. Corbin represents Sierra Club’s Beyond Dirty Fuels Campaign. “It is an absolute privilege to work beside her,” Corbin says, “She has been a facilitator and an immense help,” and notes that Miller is able to see connections within the environment while maintaining an awareness of diversity and equity. “[Jen] makes space for us to be at the table or opening up dialogue,” she says, “She has that ability to bring everyone together.”

“She is one of the most charming advocates of all people that I’ve ever known,” says Megan Palmer, singer-songwriter and palliative care nurse, who met Miller at Capital. The two friends became roommates and frequently performed together. “[Jen has] always been someone who is thinking about people who are going through challenging times that may be less fortunate,” she adds. “Whatever is going on, she is going to be the person to mobilize, she’ll make the phone calls - she will make it all happen,” Palmer says.

Having a reputation as a hard worker, Miller was awarded a full scholarship at Ohio State’s John Glenn School of Public Affairs, where she earned a Master’s in Arts Policy, Education and Administration. In the past two years, she has traveled to over 60 Ohio counties representing League of Women Voters and includes music in her presentations. “I might sing an old protest song or spiritual as part of my speeches to inspire people,” she says.

Miller also worked for the King Arts Complex where she helped establish the Heritage Concert Series. She also volunteers with ComFest’s Entertainment Committee. Jen has performed with some of Columbus’s finest musicians and some of her dearest friends. “Jazz is the best of the United States,” Miller says, “Jazz is all about diverse cultures coming together as an incredible art form.”

As a mother, an artist, a defender of the democratic process, and an advocate of all voices, ComFest is honored to recognize the work of Jen Miller.

— Shanna Harrell
It’s a dramatic photo.

Even in a turbulent, violent and heartbreaking year with many of them, it’s an unsettling image. It’s not from Minneapolis, or Washington D.C., or Atlanta. It’s from right here in Columbus, Ohio.

The photograph is of an African-American protester being dragged from an expensive event by Columbus police officers. An event, for which they purchased tickets to honor the memory and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The incident on January 20 now seems prescient of a year of police violence against African-Americans, nationwide protests and a national reckoning about who we really are in these United States in 2020.

The demonstrator in the photo is Mia Santiago. They, along with Dkeama Alexis, from the Columbus Freedom Coalition (CFC), interrupted remarks by Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther at the carefully choreographed breakfast event. They were protesting in memory of Julius Tate, Jr. In December, 2018, 16-year-old Tate, Jr., was shot and killed by a Columbus SWAT officer during an undercover investigation.

Both protesters were dragged out of the event, taken into custody and charged with criminal trespassing. Charges were finally dropped on June 4.

That singular act exposed a community’s hypocrisy, resulted in a CFC meeting with the Mayor, and likely caused some introspection by people who are supposed to be leading around here.

“I know Mia as a soft-spoken person with a gentle effect, but there is nothing gentle about Mia’s activism or the way they were dragged out of that MLK breakfast,” says community activist and ComFest organizer Kaitlin Peterman.

“It forced the people at that breakfast to confront their own racism and hypocrisy and own the fact that not a single one of them was willing to stand up for the Black people who were dragged out that day. Mia kept getting back out there to make their voice heard,” adds Peterman.

If meaningful change results, then Mia Santiago’s action and ordeal that January day will have had a major impact. If meaningful change is stalled again, Mia will continue their efforts to organize, mobilize and educate.

“It’s often hard to tell the impacts of these actions,” Mia said. “But there is so much great work being done by so many; activism itself can be encouraging.”

Mia grew up in Chicago, graduated from Columbia University and came to Columbus to pursue a Master’s of Fine Arts (MFA) in non-fiction writing at The Ohio State University.

“I’ve kind of always been political and drawn to organizing and protesting,” they said. “When I was younger I got involved in queer issues and the Occupy movement.”

In New York City during college, they became involved with Student Worker Solidarity efforts and in protest movements that emerged after Eric Garner was choked to death during a police encounter.

In Columbus, Mia became involved in CFC and the Black Queer & Intersectional Collective. Both organizations seek to end all forms of state-sanctioned violence and build a world without police or prisons.

“I’ve never felt as fulfilled as I do when I devote my time to organizing,” Mia says.

The aggressive action taken against Mia at the breakfast celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr., a protester and advocate of disorder, as 2020 began seems far off amid today’s protests and the demands for transformation. But their singular act offers hope for achieving goals that were unthinkable six months ago.

“I have been so impressed by Mia's bravery, resilience, and drive to keep working for change,” says Peterman. “Their work exemplifies the spirit of Comfest by showing perseverance and dedication to social justice.”

Reflecting on their efforts and these challenging times, Mia is optimistic.

“If each one of us is able to inspire some positive radical action in another, our movement will be unstoppable, they said. “Collectively we wield incredible power.”

ComFest is proud to recognize Mia Santiago as 2020’s Honored Community Activist.

— Marty Stutz
To watch Wally Mitchel play drums is a Zen experience. He is a master of the sticks with the focus and intensity of a Buddhist monk creating a sand mandala, and like sand paintings even after they are swept away, the complex dimensions of Wally’s music remain with the listener. Dubbed “The East Side Kid” by fellow jazz musician and bandmate Joe Diamond (d.2010), Wally grew up in a musical family. His grandmother played piano and his father as a child sang and danced from a flatbed truck, soliciting people to buy War Bonds. His parents were multi-instrumentalists. Wally began playing piano, then horn, and by 9 he took up drums, and the die was cast. After majoring in music at the Ohio State University and marching with “the best damn band in the land” for four years, Wally made Columbus his home and began gigging at Dick’s Den. He played with Diamond, Hank Marr, Rusty Bryant, and many other jazz names.

Wally eventually was offered a Deck’s Den Residency where he played with local jazz greats in some interesting combos. He was also the drummer for the house band at The Lincoln Café Saturday night jazz jams and continued to play with some of the finest, including the late, great saxophonist Gene Walker (d.2014). Every Sunday night for decades Wally has played with younger jazz musicians, including Matt Paetsch, bassist and co-leader of The Wally Mitchel Band. He took as many as three bus trips to haul his equipment to Dick’s Den.

Wally played his first ComFest in 1975 and has rarely missed a festival since. That makes him ComFest family. He recalls how small it was and how much it has grown “because ComFest’s core values of peace and harmony hold up.” He says he enjoys seeing peaceful people from “all over the world” and he looks forward to “catching up with old pals at the festival.” With special appreciation for their friendships, Wally mentions Don Pavelchek, aka “The Pope” (d.1999) and Krista “Kitty” Williams. Krista was instrumental in growing the I Wish You Jazz area from a tent to its current location at Goodale and Park Streets. Wally also started and was original drummer for Circus of Cool; Krista also worked with him on the project.

Wally is in good health at 80 and braves the pandemic with good spirit. But he expresses sadness that racism and injustice persist. He mentions affectionately the friendship and mentoring he received from Columbus African American musicians when he was young. “They encouraged me and helped me feel comfortable playing anywhere,” he says. He still enjoys playing at the festival for old fans and new, and he hopes people will tune into Virtual ComFest this year.

Wally Mitchel is a helluva jazz drummer, a skilled artist, and a really good guy. He is beloved by fellow musicians and fans alike; like all great drummers, he is a good listener. It is reflected in his drumming and his demeanor; he is courteous and mindful and a generous teacher by example (“practice every day and enjoy it”).

ComFest is proud to make him Honored Artist 2020.

— Michael Doody
Curtis Schieber is a treasure trove of ComFest information and experience. His first Community Festival experiences were in 1975 and 1976 and he has attended every year since then but one, in a variety of roles. He loved the feeling of community the festival provided, which really hit home during the parking lot years when he and others spread mulch on the ground to protect it from rain and people dancing on it. “The thing is,” he laughs, “everybody was wearing sandals, and the mulch kept getting between their toes. A disaster.” But the feeling of community endured.

From then on, things fell into his lap, he says. He worked as stage hand for years, growing and learning under the guidance of Don Pavelcik at the Jazz Stage. At one point, he stepped in as musician, playing sousaphone with Skrall. Personally, he was producing shows at ‘Staches, he wrote music reviews for local papers. All of which helped in his stage managing.

His favorite ComFest moment was working Bozo Stage one year as a storm approached. A torrential downpour hit the festival and one band cancelled. There was ½ inch of water on the stage. Curt says Watershed was next up, and they decided to play. Singing and splashing water everywhere, but careful not to touch the electronics, Watershed played on.

This inspired Curt to do more for the festival. He worked 4 shifts throughout a weekend some years. The way he did things influenced the logistics of the Jazz Stage, which was copied by other stages. At the 2000 festival, Curt managed the stage for the entire weekend, one of the muggiest, hottest festival on record. He says he had to learn how to drink water instead of beer, to stay hydrated.

Over time, the Entertainment committee formed roving supervisors to help work the stages, and Curt worked with them, mentoring. Soon Curt decided to narrow his focus, working a show Saturday and Sunday mornings, now it is just Sunday mornings. In the meantime, Curt spread his talents to the Program Guide, writing essays for years. Yet, he still has to remind people that his name is pronounced “She-ber not Shi-ber”. Schieber is a German name, so the second vowel is pronounced, not the first.

Reinvention has been at the soul of Curt’s career, a process of learning on the job. Curt’s interest in music led him to own and operate School Kids Records, a record store in Columbus. This lead to writing music reviews of local bands and records. He wrote reviews and essays for Columbus Alive, The Guardian, and the Dispatch. This opened the doors to doing a radio show on CD101 for 29 years, broadcasting Sunday nights at 9:00. He wrote and published a book, Columbus Beer, a history of brewing beer in Columbus (well written!) and he was a record producer, under the clever title No Other Records. The whole time, Curt was a constant presence at each festival, working behind the scenes, learning how to get things done, getting things done.

We are extremely grateful to Curt for all of his years of volunteering, nurturing, and growing ComFest.

— Jonathan Johns
Thanks To Our Amazing 2019 ComFest Volunteers


Bike Corral: Thomas Babb, John Bannon, Chris Benedetti, Tanya Bils, Hobbs Boots, Britt Butler, Jack Butler, Matt Cline, Brian Cooperider, Keiffer Erdmann, Jared Finchum, Esther Flatto, Alex Gallegos, Jennifer Gibson, Edward Hara, Rebecca Henry, Emma Hite, Benjamin Houck, Susan m James, Ana Kabakova, Jeffrey Katz, Jay Keyarts, Benjamin Kile, Deanne Krouse, Maggie Mahoney, Peri McDougall, Pamela Mogough, Julie ann McKinney, Dan Montour, Ellie Murphy, Alex Oliszewski, Brian Pace, Emily Patterson, Brian Perkins, Amy Planchet, Jason Poindexter, Ben Rapson, Chris Rapson, Cindy e Rapson, Ernie Rapson, Teddy Reese, Joy Robinson, Isaac Sarton, Eric Schafer, Adam Schirztinger, Steave Scott, Rick Shears, Scott Shiveley, Sherri Sims, Jayme Snuggles, Cherie Snyder, Whitney Thompson, Heidi Vanderpool, Nathan Wallace, Stephen Woods, Gretel Young


COMFEST.COM  VIRTUAL COMMUNITY FESTIVAL 2020

Food Fairies: Colin Adams, Elisa Amari, Robert Ayala, Madeline Berry, Melinda Biznes, Tim Brown, Keri Burgoon, Sarah Carruthers, Jamie Claxton, Bob Cope, Gina Cristofani, Lori Davis, Sully Gerdeman, Jeff Gondek, Cynthia Hempy, Brenda Hosey, Jacob Hutmire, Charlie Kall, Jacqueline Kelley, Andr Lewis, Eloy Martinez, Gary Pandera, Evan Pond, Joyce Rice, Kamaya Rozzelle-daniels, Jessica Smith, Michal Stromso delrenzo, Deirdre Tobin

Grants: Kate Curry da Souza; Ann Kemble, Jim Irwin, Julialynne Walker, Kitty Horan, Loyce Thesefeld, Marty Stutz


Anthony Richardson, CeCe Roberts, Quante Rosvanis, Ebony Rozelle, Elias Rozelle, Isaiah Rozelle, Israel Rozelle, Kamaya Rozelle, Maya Rozelle, Quintin Rozelle, Rayshad Rozelle, Helena Roussi, Jada Sidoti, Madison Smith, Corissa Spence, Destiny Stallings, Tamara, Steven Trent, Asya Tucker, Bill Vokas, David Vokas, Forest Vokas, Hailey Vokas, Fiona Wherry, Jawuqalia Williams, Jarred Willis, Adam Wolters, Kathy Wright, Courtney Yoder, Christina Yoh, Kristy Yonon, Nicole Zahrndt

Logistics: Short North Civic Association, Friends Of Goodale Park, Short North Alliance, Victorian Village Commission, Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Kevin Friend, All neighbors and area businesses, City of Columbus, Mayor Andrew Ginther, Columbus Division of Fire, Columbus Division of Police and all the duty officers, Columbus Division of Recreation & Parks, Jason Nicholson, Ron Keller, Columbus City Council, Columbus Division of Development, Columbus Division of Refuse, Columbus Division of Engineering, Columbus Division of Water & Electric, Columbus City Forester, Mark Springer, Mark DiPiero, Jackie Howard, Valerie Clements, Lt. Ty Brust and all the Special Duty officers, Retired Officer Sheila Summers, Tuesday Summers, Kevin Brammer, Tim Chavez, Connie Everett, Bill Finzel, Bernie Frankl Rick Franz, Aaron Freeman, Eliza Marlow Freeman, Fred Gittes, Doug Goudy, Michael Gruber, Michelle Kalters, Todd Kalters, Gabor Klein, Liz Landrigan, Darryl Mendelson, Ro-z Mendelson, Amanda Owen, Larry Pike, Micki B Pike, Bill Reynolds Jr. of Rent A John (that fork lift comes in handy) Timothy Wolfe Starr, Michael Tom, Ashley Voss, Candy Watkins, Jeff Widner, Helen Yee, Lynda Zamora, SITE OPERATIONS: Karl Biery, Carie Abel, Alli Acuff, Heather Adair, Aaron Albert, Terry Bowman, Jason Deck, Therese Edwards, John Feerick, Michael Gof, William Gort, Heath Grimm, Jennifer Guigliemolo, Stephen Hanna, Mike Hansen, Brock Harbolt, Maureen Harbolt, Mary Louise Hawkins, David Hecht, Bharati Jayant, Kyle Jepson, Weshe Juty, Poppy Karpalla, Rebekah Karpalla, Gregory Kilcup, Kamal Kimball, Mary Klein, Verbz Kloth, Jake Kopetski, Megan KRISBY, Carlos Maciel, William McGilivray, William Midgley, Adeline Musser, Violet Musser, Tae Person, Michael Pesce, Ricki Pike, Alan Ramey, Lizeth Rascon, Jordan Reed, Chet Ridenour, Liz Ross, Dan Roso, Quinn Sarver, Zoe Sarver, Frank Shearer, Leo Simon, Moran Sinclair, Mikelle Smith, Nicholas Steinbrecher, Jeff Suchy, Julie Willis, Nick Woods, Mollie Workman PARKING: Doug Goudy, Michael Gruber, all our neighbors for their cooperation

Peace Village/Healing Arts: Erin Aluisie, Charles Atkins, Stephen Begala, Cheri Bowman, Alex Criado, Susan Donley, Therese Edwards, Teresa Featherstone, Jared Hall, Tom Hamilton, Mike Kostkize, Julie Kurzenberger, Kelly Montgomery, Alysah Morales, Ellie Murphy, Yalan Papillons, Tim Parrish, David Pollock, Terence Robertson, Kristine Usselman, Pete Wiseman

Program: (staff box page 4) Tonja Aleshire, David Azenes, Dwain Baer, Ashley Barnick, Dave Beckman, Gregory Booton, Roberto Cervantes, Lori Coleman, Gianna Collins, Jocelyn Curry, Tracy Daly, Charity Elizerman, Allison Ellis, Jeffrey Ellis, Julie Ellis, Charles Fannin, Aaron Frisby, Camden Frisby, Cynthia Hanke, Jeremy Hirschfeld, Liza Hoopes, Kitty Horan, Morgan霍sworth, Page Hunt, Scott Jackson, Kitty Johns, Kelly Johnson, Julie Karlock, Jay Keytars, Nicholas Kline, Sarah Kriebel, Paul Lada, Julie Leukart, Lucy Lucero, Lynda McLanahan, John McKeown, Stephanie Miller, Mimi Morris, Diana Morrison, Brenda O’herron, Betsy Obrochta, Eric Peters, Corrie Pietersson, Allison Pitts, Vanessa Prentice, Courtney Riley, Alan Sheppard, Heather Soha, Maki Sonezaki, Jackie Stanton, Jaimie Striff, Robin Swanson, Melanie Travers, Amy Turn sharp, Grace Wallace, Michael Weber, Elise White, V White, Brian Williams, Wilming Yee

How Do You Get A Cool Shirt? Volunteer!


Tech: Lu Brammer, Ty Day, Solomon Ford, Jared Keron, Bill Kurzenberger, Julie Kurzenberger, Darryl Mendelson, Ro-Z Mendelson, Meghan Ralston

Voter Registration: Erika Baker, Joanie Calem, Daniel Carroll, Philena Farley, Joe George, Rachael Holland, Jen House, Scott Jackson, Destiny Jenkins, Jen Knox, Daniel Lorz, Michael Marrero, Rachel Moore, Jeannell Nutter, Caitlin Peet, Kristen Sharrock, Hilary Shaw, Kay Slone, Kelly Slone, Ryder Smith, Scott Solzman, Thursday St Giles, Cyndy Stratton, Nova Pax Thrasher, Justin Vance, Rick Zwelling

Your Name Here: Would you like to see your name here? You need to volunteer in 2021. - THANK YOU!

Community — Now More Than Ever

That ComFest began nearly fifty years ago as a small street fair with a big message: by working together, we could build a community able to manage and support itself. To improve the food we ate, we formed a food co-op. To address people’s medical needs, there was a free clinic. Groups such as the women’s collective Fan the Flames, the Columbus Tenants Union, and others shared a message that in many ways has been forgotten: It’s not enough to address the problems that divide a community. Anyone can do that. But you also have to build a community, to create ways that bring people together. And that’s through collective self-empowerment.

If the system is failing us, sure, we confront that system. But we also create our own systems—alternative systems, new and better systems by coming together and working together as a self-reliant community. This is a message that crosses social, cultural, ethnic, religious, and even some political barriers. It’s a message of cooperation and unity, a message with a vision for not only cleaning up the mess that so many feel overwhelmed by now, but also taking it to the next level.

It’s a message of inclusion and a shield against despair. Because community needs everybody, everybody’s input matters. A community has the power of the people, and each person has the power of the community. This is what ComFest celebrates. This message is what the world needs to hear. Community is what the world needs now.

— Paul Volker
## Schedule of Virtual ComFest Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times</th>
<th>Friday June 26</th>
<th>Saturday June 27</th>
<th>Sunday June 28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td>Get Ready!</td>
<td>Order ComFest T-shirt!</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
<td>Get Set!</td>
<td>Donate to Grants Committee!</td>
<td>Tai Chi w/ Ro-Z and Darryl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 Noon</td>
<td>Welcome to Virtual ComFest!</td>
<td>Live Streaming: Tim Easton</td>
<td>Live Streaming: Eric Altheen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 PM</td>
<td>Live Streaming: The Shazzbots</td>
<td></td>
<td>Virtual Solar Songwriter round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
<td>Archives</td>
<td>Archives</td>
<td>Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
<td>Recent Live Local Performances</td>
<td>Recent Live Local Performances</td>
<td>Recent Live Local Performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>Classic Live Performances</td>
<td>Classic Live Performances</td>
<td>Classic Live Performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>Performer videos</td>
<td>Performer videos</td>
<td>Performer videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>Live Streaming: The Spike Drivers</td>
<td>Live Streaming Performer TBA</td>
<td>Live Streaming: Donna Mogavero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 PM</td>
<td>Performer Videos</td>
<td>Performer Videos</td>
<td>Performer Videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 PM</td>
<td>Recent Live Performances</td>
<td>Recent Live Performances</td>
<td>Local bands streaming music,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 PM</td>
<td>Live Streaming: Tony Monico</td>
<td>Live Streaming: Tony Monico</td>
<td>all night long, if you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 PM</td>
<td>End of Broadcast</td>
<td>End of Broadcast</td>
<td>The Festival ends, but all events are still available at comfest.com</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can help fund our community! Order ComFest t-shirts and more. Find the Merch link at comfest.com

Entertainment Schedule

https://www.comfest.com/virtual-entertainment

Happy ComFest!
The 2020 Community Festival Street Fair reflects the diverse progressive Community in Central Ohio. In the linked listings you will discover handmade items and art from around the world; discover local businesses, learn more about the community organizations passionate about the work done to make society a better place, and find out how YOU can get involved in the links next to each listing! You'll find tasty food from your favorite vendors in the Food Vendor Link - please order from them during the Festival and after! Your support and patronage of these local artists, businesses, and organizations is vital to keeping them alive well into the future.

The Street Fair's many physical paths lead from food to art, from live performance to social change. Now virtually, take some time to go look at the community organizations for information about how you can make our society, our world a better place; shop at the vendors links and websites to find treasures so unique they literally cannot be found anywhere else, and order snacks from the community and commercial food vendors for great eats.

HAPPY COMFEST!
— Joan Couden and Candy Watkins

Link to the Virtual Street Fair at https://www.comfest.com/virtual-street-fair

Photos by: Michael Gruber
You've seen that neat ComFest T-shirt that all the volunteers are wearing. YOU can design the logo for next year. Every year we put out a call for folks to bring their ideas for a logo design.

Designs must have the dates June 25, 26, & 27, 2021 and the name “Community Festival” and must incorporate the Hopewell symbol into the logo. Images need to be camera ready and one color image (no grayscale). After the first of next year, go to comfest.com and look for the logo contest link for more details.

2021 Logo Contest
Thursday, March 11, 2021, 7:30 PM
Goodale Park Shelterhouse
Upload entries prior to March 11
logo@comfest.com

ComFest Logo Design: This year's logo design was created by Katelyn Ratajczak. We congratulate her and all the talented artists who entered.

LOGO CONTEST

ComFest Merch

Happy ComFest, ComFesters!

As you enjoy Virtual ComFest all weekend long, please check out the 2020 souvenirs available for sale within the comfest.com website and in the Virtual ComFest pages.

There are three 2020 T-shirt options – the winning logo design and the two runner up designs. You will probably want one of each.

Repurposing old volunteer ComFest T-shirts is fun and a trifecta. You support a great cause and get an item you can use, support local artisans who created these unique limited quantity items, and we get them out of the warehouse.

A portion of every festival purchase comes back to fund the Community Festival's grants program. Since 2006, ComFest has awarded more than $320,000 to organizations and projects that promote the ComFest Statement of Principles. Wear a little ComFest all year long.

—Lynn Stan

https://www.comfestmerch.com
This Empty Park

I. Discovery

I moved to Columbus in late 1988. I found an apartment on the third floor (actually, the attic) of a double that had been carved up into 10 units overlooking Goodale Park. I thought the rent was pretty steep at $200 a month, but I wanted to be near the park, close to downtown and perhaps most importantly, near the burgeoning Short North. The woman who showed me the place sought to seal the deal by remarking that the tiny alcove at the front with a small window overlooking the tennis courts would be an ideal spot in which to study: “You’re a graduate student at OSU, right?”

“No,” I replied. “I’m just moving here.”

But she was right about being on the park. It was a great location; who doesn’t want to look over a park? And it was walkable (if anyone cared about that then). There was the Big Bear grocery store close by on Neil Avenue and the neighborhood seemed pretty cool. At that time, the real urban pioneers like Sandy Wood, John Allen, The Emperor Doug Ritchey and the many artists and gallery owners were transforming the Short North, a neighborhood that would become the envy of urban planners everywhere. And yet, notably, there was no plan!

The following June, I noticed that some kind of event was being set up on the Park Street side of the park on what was then known as the ‘moonscape’. Wandering over on a Friday evening I was immediately drawn into the sights, sounds and smells of a gathering festival. There were bands on a stage, lights strung around, fun stuff to buy for a small apartment gazpacho from a food co-op, a newspaper selling corn on the cob and a welcome dose of community and political activism at tables and booths all around the site.

It was a music festival, activist forum, arts and crafts show, food event all tied together with the progressive politics, social justice, and community organizing that I had been warned did not really exist in Columbus, Ohio. And yet here it was on this blighted parcel. Lots of it.

This was called, I learned, ComFest. It didn’t seem like I was attending an ordinary summer festival. I felt invited to the Community Festival.

Kind of like, “C’mon in, we’re glad you’re here!”

You could say that immediately I got a ComFest hug. So, of course, I hugged it back. And, I’ve never planned to do anything else during the last weekend in June since that Friday night.

Over these 30 plus years, I’ve volunteered for this great “Party with a Purpose” in a variety of ways. I’ve enjoyed the simple pleasures of serving at beer booths, seeing old friends and making new ones. I’ve staffed Information Central greeting attendees and dispensing (generally accurate) directions, and written for the Program Guide. I’ve picked up trash and hung around after closing on Sunday nights to help the teardown and traffic flow as ComFest rolls up for another year, and on and on. Different volunteer activities, different shifts, I’ve enjoyed the opportunity to do any of it.

II. The Common

Perhaps it was inevitable that ComFest would eventually move into Goodale Park which it did shortly after my first time. This great urban space (bucolic at the edge of a growing capital city) was gifted to the residents of Columbus in 1851 by Dr. Lincoln Goodale, Columbus’ first physician. The park thrived as Columbus grew and the neighborhood has thrived with it, declined and then emerged again as a polished gem in a now vibrant, perhaps overly so, part of town.

To imagine the idea that resulted in the park, one should think of a New England public common or village green. (Goodale was born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1782; his family relocated to Marietta around 1788.) If Dr. Goodale’s vision for the park was not directly/necessarily based on the model of the common or village green found in Worcester and throughout New England, it certainly resulted in a very near facsimile to it.
On any given day Goodale Park is an urban oasis attracting joggers, downtown workers, strollers, dog walkers, picnics; all of the activities urban parks are really good at. The tree canopy has endured storms, disease and neglect, and park volunteers and the city have nurtured its beauty. The shelterhouse has become a community gathering place. Walkways have been laid out and maintained; playgrounds and tennis courts built and rebuilt, and the surviving lake restored as an attraction of its own. And the fountain...ah, yes, the fountain. Built, repaired, demolished, rebuilt again and then again, lake drained, repaired...

A respite away from the din of High Street is really only interrupted by the freeway humming along the southern edge of the park. The construction of I-670 several years ago threatened to swallow portions of the park. In an unlikely victory, the freeway was pushed beneath and away from the southeastern corner, sparing this treasure.

I, like thousands of others, value this special place and find peace and contentment here.

But of course, on the last full weekend in June every year, the park is transformed into a community gathering place. ComFest is really when the promise of a common space held by and for the citizens of this “village” is most fully realized. The notion of the common is the promise of community engagement; meeting and celebrating with one’s neighbors; fellowship, and the actualization of the civic bonds holding the promise of the shared together.

In the days running up to ComFest, the park takes on a completely different purpose/feel/aura. Music and workshop stages are built, power lines hooked up, tents for vendors and community groups go up; the ComFest village takes shape. By Friday morning, the music kicks off, Streetfair is open, community organizations staff their tables, local food purveyors light the grills and the celebration is on.

As if by town crier, the city’s progressive community is called together to reacquaint with one another. The past year’s efforts are discussed; victories are celebrated, and losses mourned. We are motivated, consoled, cheered on and re-energized. Hope springs.

And, there are ComFest hugs all around.

One cannot easily put a label on ComFest. Yes, there is the Statement of Principles which guides ComFest and organizers; there’s a logo and slogan selected and promoted each year. Thousands of T-shirts and mugs signaling ones service to the festival and support for the values go out into the v=broader community. There’s the one and only celebration of local music covering every genre, the education at workshops, the information sharing among organizations; there’s activism and voter registration, local vendors, arts and crafts, an openness to new ideas, the bohemian and the (formerly) marginalized. The future does indeed show up here first.

III. The Spirit that Inhabits the Park

Everyone has their favorite part of the weekend. For me, perhaps surprisingly, it’s often at the end of the festival. The aforementioned Sunday night when the village is disassembled and the vendors are heading out. It’s the time when all our brothers and sisters in the progressive community are heading back into the larger community to continue the hard work for the cause and ultimately, for one another.

“See you next year,” we always say.

For me, as ComFest ends on Sunday night, it remains just hovering over the park. The sounds of the Jazz stage, Gazebo, Bozo still linger in the air. The smells of all that food, the calls to resist, organize, and VOTE; the joy of reconnecting with old friends and neighbors (and dancing) at the Gazebo stage. It’s still there. It’s living out ComFest values during the rest of the year in the community at large; organizing, building, and setting the example. It’s winning and losing, but always hopeful and determined. ComFest never really ends.

IV. This Empty Park

This year, that never-really-ending spirit is more important than ever. Because this year, there is no village being set up in the park. This last weekend in June 2020, the park will just be the park.

The echoes of ComFest that linger in the park after the last stage is taken down, tents removed and the park is restored to a better state than we found it, are more important this year than ever. What we reflect on and come away with each year: new friendships, reconnecting with old, information and inspiration gleaned from workshops and the reassurance that the community is present, active and growing stronger all the time: All these we need to nurture and sustain in 2020 without the physical festival; without the community gathering together in this community space.

This empty park is temporary. The same as every year; ComFest the weekend ends on Sunday night, but actually it lives all year long.

Virtual ComFest Hugs! And, see you next year!

— Marty Stutz
Community Organizations

- Absentee Ballot Request - Franklin County Board of Elections
- African Professionals Network
- Americans United for Separation of Church and State-Ohio Chapter
- Black Lives Matter
- Break Free From Plastic Movement
- BUDDHIST NETWORK OF CENTRAL OHIO
- Buddhist-Christian Mother-Earth Church
- C.H.O.I.C.E. Midwives
- Cannabis Museum
- CD102.5
- Center for Pragmatic Buddhism
- CENTRAL OHIO FAIR HOUSING ASSOCIATION
- Central Ohio Worker Center
- Cleveland School of Cannabis
- CMAA REFUGEE SERVICES
- Colony Cats and Dogs
- Columbus Coalition for the Homeless
- Columbus Coalition of Reason
- Columbus Community Bill of Rights
- COLUMBUS CREW
- COLUMBUS FREE CLINIC
- Columbus Free Press
- Columbus Freedom Coalition
- Columbus Freedom Fund
- COLUMBUS KTC
- Columbus Music Commission
- Columbus Veg Community
- Columbus Vegan Meetup/Vegan Shift
- Community Refugee & Immigration Services (CRIS)
- Compassionate Communication Center of Ohio
- CORVA Central Ohio Returned Peace Corp Volunteer Association
- COZY CAT COTTAGE ADOPTION CENTER
- Defend Our Future
- DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF CENTRAL OHIO
- DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
- Ecole Kenwood PTO
- Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS)
- Faith Mission
- FAN (Franklin Avenue Neighbors)
- Franklin County Board of Elections
- Franklin County Democratic Party
- Franklin County Loss
- FRANKLINTON CYCLE WORKS
- Freedom of Choice Ohio
- Friends of Doo Dah
- Friends of Goodale Park
- Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW)
- GiveBackHack Columbus
- Grassroots Ohio
- Gray Matter Media
- GREEN PARTY
- Headcount.Org (Voter Registration)
- Homeless Coalition
- Huckleberry House
- Humane Society of the US or Stop Puppy Mills Ohio
- HUMANIST COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL OHIO
- Indivisible Columbus
- ISKCON (Krishna House)
- Kenwood PTO
- Lincoln Theatre Columbus
- LSS CHOICES
- LSS Lutheran Social Services
- Move to Amend
- Move to Amend Central Ohio
- My Brothers Keeper Village Columbus
- Ngare Sergoi Support Group
- NORML
- North Central Mental Health
- O.N.E. Campaign
- Ohio Cannabis
- Ohio Community Rights Network
- Ohio Green Party
- Ohio Marijuana Card
- Ohio Organizing Collaborative
- Ohio Revolution
- OHIO ROLLER DERBY
- Ohio Roller Derby
- Peoples Justice Project
- Promowest
- REBUILDING TOGETHER OF CENTRAL OHIO
- Red Oak Community School
- Register to Vote - Franklin County Board of Elections
- Revolutions No Joke
- Sierra Club Central Ohio
- SIMPLY LIVING
- Socialist Alternative
- Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)
- Star House
- The Center for Balanced Living
- Third Hand Bike Co-Op
- Three Cranes Grove
- VEGAN SHIFT
- WCBE 90.5 FM
- WCRS COMMUNITY RADIO 92.7/98.3
- Women Have Options
- Yes We Can Columbus
- Zora’s House
IN MEMORIAM

Just Remember Death is Not The End — Bob Dylan

Margaret Sarber-Nie
Margaret Sarber Nie passed away on Earth Day, April 22, 2020, after a long struggle with a neurological disorder that robbed her of her mobility and her speech.

She was known to many as ‘Mad Margaret’ from early on, not for any disorder, but rather for the zeal with which she pursued positive change. In that, Margaret was a force of nature.

Margaret was an anti-war activist during the Vietnam War and, per Bob Fitrakis, “the most radical Free Press editor”. She was arrested by the Columbus Police ‘Red Squad’ in May, 1972 along with three other members of the Columbus Free Press at a time when visible leaders of the movement were prime targets. She was the only female of the group.

She was an organizer, volunteer, and contributor in the OSU Campus community of the late 1960’s and early ’70’s that spawned numerous alternative organizations. These groups formed the basis of the Community Union and ultimately the Community Festival.

From the earliest days on 16th Ave, Margaret’s voice could be heard from the ComFest stage sharing her vision of peace and freedom. Margaret’s commitment formed a feminism that did not require permission. She was radical enough in the Emma Goldman tradition that the FBI recruited her first husband to keep an eye on her.

Margaret also participated in less radical activities. She served on the University Area Commission and, later in life, worked as a library assistant for branches of the Columbus Metropolitan Library.

Margaret also knew how to have fun. If there was a party, salon, or soiree, she would be there. “Her ability to be joyous was one of her best qualities,” according to her bereaved husband of nearly 32 years, Jim Nie.

Additional memories of Margaret’s work with the Columbus Free Press can be found at https://columbusfreepress.com/article/margaret-sarber-most-radical-free-press-editor

—Harry Farkas

Rev. Bert Cantrell
Burt Cantrell died this year. Without Burt there would not have been a Community Festival.

It was Burt who opened up the Wesley Foundation which he described as the “big, empty building” to student activist groups doing the early 70s. A number of these groups — the Columbus Tenants’ Union, the Free Press, the Food Co-op and various anti-war campaigns — coalesced into the Community Union.

It was the Community Union that founded Community Festival in 1972. Burt played an even more positive role by allowing ComFest to use the Foundation building as a home base during the festival. Many progressive and alternative organizations found a home at the Wesley Foundation.

During this time Burt had to constantly defend his decision to allow all those “hippies” to use the building. The Methodist Church was not as inclusive then as it is now, and eventually Burt’s offer to let the Gay Alliance to hold a dance there turned out to be the last straw for the church hierarchy.

After Burt left the the Job as campus minister in 1976, ComFest could no longer use the Wesley Foundation as a base of operations. Finally in the mid-80s the antagonism in the area against the festival became overwhelming and the festival was forced to move to the Short North where it still is held every year.

Burt in his own right was an activist. While at Youngstown State, “Burt was co-founder of the Gates of Eden Coffee House, a ‘safe place’ for all students to meet and converse without the interference of alcohol or of being judged for who they were.” He was also a regional director for the anti-nuclear group SANE, a director of the Mid-Ohio Food Bank, and the director of the Metropolitan Area Council of Churches. And when the KKK got a permit to put up a cross on the Statehouse lawn, Burt mobilized clergy from all over the area to add so many other crosses that the Klan’s message was overshadowed.

From Burt’s obituary, ComFest “carries on his ideals of community action, equality, and peace for all.” His open-hearted spirit will always be with us.

—Mimi Morris and Michael Weber
IN MEMORIAM

Les Stansbery

Les Stansbery embodied ComFest values. He was guided by a commitment to faith-based community and worked tirelessly to further that goal. An ordained Presbyterian minister, he served as an Army Chaplain, was president of the Interfaith Association in Columbus, and served on the Metropolitan Church Board.

His experiences and education enhanced his beliefs. Les earned a PhD in International Studies from OSU and became Executive Director of UNICEF. He was instrumental in the Columbus Campaign for Arms Control. Having participated in the freedom riders movement, Les spent his life working justice and equality for all. He worked closely with Central Ohioans for Peace and Pastors for Peace projects and helped found B.R.E.A.D.

Les received many awards and recognitions for his contributions, among them the Columbus Free Press Libby Award for Community Activism. Both Les and his late wife Margaret “Peg” were ComFest Honored Activists and over the years volunteered with ComFest to speak and participate on workshop panels. He was always willing to lend a hand.

Local activist and editor of Columbus Free Press Suzanne Patzer offers this high praise: “Les Stansbery was a strong, courageous pillar of support for the progressive activist community in Columbus for decades. He spread the word of love and peace at all our anti-war demonstrations but was a radical at heart. He actively worked on Central American issues, particularly the Copapayo, El Salvador Sister City Project and Pastors for Peace in their missions to fight the embargo and bring humanitarian aid to Cuba. His words, actions and courage inspired all of us to not be afraid to fight injustice and make a difference in the world.”

— Connie Everett

Cindy Strauss

The Columbus activist community lost longtime friend Cynthia Vail Stevens Strauss recently to COVID19. Cindy, as she was known to friends, grew up in Columbus, earned her B.A. in Music at The Ohio State University, and studied Vocal Performance in New York City. She earned a B.S. in Elementary Education at SMU in Dallas, Texas, an M.A. in Elementary Education at OSU in Columbus, and was an elementary teacher in the Columbus Public Schools for 26 years.

Cindy, along with her husband Art, were well-known and beloved in the progressive community. They were active in Central Ohio Sierra Club. Whether making flyers and bumper stickers or driving people to meetings and demonstrations, they could be counted on. Sierra Club’s Pat Marida explains, “Art had a photocopier back in the day when they were harder to find. They would bring literature to meetings, ComFest, Earth Day, etc.”

The couple were also founding members of Simply Living and hosted Earth Institute Study Groups in their home. Chuck Lynd remembers “While Art was more vocal, they were very much a power couple, and Cindy's gentle spirit and innate kindness grounded them both in their activism and commitment to environmental causes. Cindy remained engaged after Art died, and just last year she came to a Simply Living meetup at the Green Haven Living store in Westerville. She was ready to help revitalize the Sustainable Westerville group!” Cindy was 95.

— Connie Everett

Aaron Freeman

Long-time Community Festival volunteer Aaron Freeman, 42, passed away suddenly on April 1, 2020. Aaron was loving husband to Eliza Stirling (Marlow) Freeman and devoted father to Adrian Freeman.

Aaron was a lifelong ComFester as his immediate family and in-laws have been involved in ComFest since the early days.

Aaron and Eliza began making their own mark on ComFest in 2008. Candy Watkins asked if they would assume responsibility of the equipment team. They would oversee the set up and tear down of all the tables, chairs and umbrellas; over two tons of equipment. Their first year they toughed it out lacking enough volunteers. But the second year they recruited friends and co-workers to volunteer with them and soon oversaw a crew of over 40 people.
IN MEMORIAM

“Aaron LOVED having a golf cart to drive around,” Eliza said. “He always wanted to have one to drive around and now he had four!”

Aaron seemed to be everywhere in the park before, during and after the three days of ComFest.

“His favorite thing to do was load up the golf cart with equipment and drive around and see if he could help anyone,” said Eliza. “He wanted to help others in any way possible. That was his giving spirit. ComFest won’t be the same without him.”

Aaron loved life, loved his family and found joy everywhere. Sister-in-law Nova Gallacchio recalled that one year after Sunday night teardown at 3:00 a.m. Aaron couldn’t find his ride home and didn’t have his phone.

“So he walked home to Clintonville,” Nova said. “He got home at 5:00 am and remarked that it was good for him to see the city like that.”

Note: A GoFundMe site has been established at http://gf.me/u/xux8wk to benefit Eliza and Adrian.

— Marty Stutz

Michael Risner

Michael Risner was a great spirit. He was always smiling, laughing, enjoying the moment. Perhaps his zest for fun and helpful nature were acquired in part from the many places he lived. He grew up mainly in Columbus but spent summers in Austria; lived on Put-in-Bay Island where he co-ran “the world’s smallest Heineken bar”; moved to Boulder, Colorado and finally settled in Cedar City, Utah with his partner, Jennifer Bach, who he met while both were volunteering at ComFest.

Nature was important to Michael. He enjoyed outdoor activities of all sorts, working with plants and landscaping, and cooking. He shared ComFest’s environmental values and concerns for the planet.

Michael volunteered for ComFest KidsArt for many years. Committee Chair Meghan DeLaurentis says, “Michael was the guy who made sure we had everything we needed. Back then (early 2000s) we didn’t have a golf cart so someone had to go get water, haul in arts supplies. Michael was that guy.” Michael also volunteered for the Columbus Arts Festival and a variety of other community events and charitable causes. People enjoyed working with him. Michael passed away unexpectedly early this year.
Virtual Lemonade From Lemons

The Community Festival, which began as a venue to celebrate and showcase local music, art and community organizations, has grown to become one of the largest festivals in the area. It is nationally known as ComFest, “a party with a purpose.” Thousands of people attend the 3-day event, yet there remains no corporate sponsorship and no deep-pocket money source behind the scenes. It is run by volunteers, your friends and neighbors who want to promote social justice and equality. These people work from ideals established early in the life of the festival, the Statement of Principles (See page 5).

Thousands of volunteers work the festival, led by hundreds of people in committees such as: Safety, Spirit & Purpose, Logistics, Libations, Clean-Up & Recycling, Entertainment, 18 committees covering the vast expanse of human need and want during 3 days of sharing music, art, community organizations, good food, beer, and a liberal dose of social activism. Being a member of this party is easy: buy a beer, a mug, a T-shirt. Better yet, volunteer and get a ComFest T-shirt and ComFest money (chips) to buy beer, food or ComFest merchandise. As a member, you are asked to read and apply the Statement of Principles in everyday life or at least during the festival. Expanding on that is the concept of “ComFest 365”, to find ways to help the community on a year-round basis.

Committees meet throughout the year to prepare for the next festival. Committees report to the General Planning Committee (GPC), which meets twice monthly. This is an open committee designed to oversee the Festival and provide guidance to other committees. Decisions are made by consensus, formulated by the group. The only elected official is the Treasurer. About 20 or so people attend the GPC meetings regularly.

This year, the Committee had planned another fabulous festival. Due to some unfortunate experiences with Hate Groups at last year’s festival, many organizers were ready to produce programs about Hate Groups, how to identify them, how to interact with them, and to identify community organizations that exist to “seek to eliminate these attitudes”, as is stated in the Statement of Principles. Then the Covid-19 virus struck and everything shut down. The GPC met often during the early shutdown to figure out what the festival could do, if anything. The safest, wisest choice was to cancel the festival, and maybe attempt one in late September. But the danger of spreading this virus and trying to control exposure to attendees and volunteers over three days outweighed the desire to even have a smaller festival.

The decision to postpone was not easy to make, nor did everyone agree. The GPC spent a lot of time waiting to see if the shutdown would take effect, and how it would affect other festivals. All other events were cancelling. Could we all wear masks and stand six feet apart? Not in the beer lines that were anticipated. The GPC knew the community needed some sort of festival, especially now. What could we do? Several committees figured out a way to provide a “virtual” festival online. The idea was discussed at a GPC meeting and accepted. Like the original, this festival would be thrown together using available materials and raw talent. Tech, Entertainment and Spirit and Purpose committees thought they could come up with enough content to produce an on-line experience with workshops and speakers covering social issues, musicians providing music (some live!) as a “Virtual ComFest”. With less than a month to go, organizers decided to honor the 2020 festival dates and provide an event on-line over the last weekend of June as originally planned.

Seeing enthusiasm building for this festival, the Program committee started talking about producing an on-line Program Guide. The program usually took months to produce and was now faced with mere weeks. Here was a perfect opportunity to try something new. Indeed, everything would have to be re-thought.

To have a “party with a purpose” this time would be to focus on the “purpose” for the party. There is no template for this type of festival – it was made up as it developed. There would be no beer sales, no income for the next festival or to donate to local organizations. There would be no hugs, no dancing in the sun (or rain) with friends old or new. But there would be socially conscious programs, music, workshops, and speakers. It would all be in the comfort and safety of your home on your preferred computing device with your own beer in an old ComFest mug while wearing a volunteer T-shirt from a previous year.

Many dedicated folks have organized a lot of content from previous festivals, local musicians, new workshops, and speakers to produce a different festival experience this year. This year was to have been the 50th festival/48th year – the festival that wasn’t in Goodale Park – the Virtual ComFest of 2020.

— Jonathan Johns
KiDSART

It takes lots of different people to make the world go round.

Community festival

Ola Braam
RAISE YOUR VOICE!
SING OUT FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

COMMUNITY FESTIVAL
JUNE 26 27 28 2020

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