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EVERYONE LOVES A PARADE

PHOTO COURTESY OF CURT CONNAUGHTY

Jill Connaughty, left, and her sister Ellen walk in the 1965 Eden Prairie Parade (Eden Prairie's first and only parade). The parade route was on Highway 169/212, just east of the airport. The sign was for their younger brother Chris, who was being pushed by his older sister Maureen. Eden Prairie is set to have its second parade on Saturday, May 30.

Eden Prairie Schooner Days Parade set for May 30, 2020

BY DANIEL HUSS
dhuss@swpub.com

In 1965, the Minneapolis Police Department shut down a portion of U.S. Highway 169/212 so that Eden Prairie could have its first parade. "It was held in front of the old outdoor theater, where the landfill is," remembers Curt Connaughty, a retired Eden Prairie Schools administrator. "There were tractors and lots of walking floats. It was really small, but it was a parade."

Note: The Minneapolis Police Department, along with a local constable, provided Eden Prairie's police coverage before the city established its own police department in 1973.

Connaughty, who coached Eden Prairie High School's first football team in 1957, said there was a push to hold a homecoming parade in 1958.

"We held a big bonfire instead," he said. "We got permission from Ray Mitchell, who was both the fire chief and the school's custodian."

While there's been talk of parades since, nothing has materialized.

"How do you hold a parade in a town that doesn't have a downtown?" questioned Connaughty.

Answer: You fit one in with a shoe-horn.

On May 30, 2020, Eden Prairie is go-

ing to have its parade.

And Connaughty is sure of it.

The script reads like Hallmark movie. Connaughty, at 88 years young, heads a parade committee that includes the mayor. With the city of Eden Prairie marching and celebrating its first parade in 65 years, they meet monthly at Connaughty's house to go over the endless details that go into hosting/holding a parade.

Parades in Osseo, Hopkins, Excelsior and Bayport are talked about as examples.

When the proposed parade route gets a "thumbs down" from city administrators, Connaughty, along with a couple parade committee members, meet at City Hall. With the city manager and police and fire

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VOLUME 46, ISSUE 7
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