

First off this was a decision that was made long before anything happened at this year's party or anything said afterwards. I honestly thought that it would have been a decision forced on me by the powers to be years ago, as it was in Wisconsin, but somehow my luck continues to hold out (probably because I have no luck anywhere else). Overall I can't believe how smooth things went and how few incidents we had considering there were over 1000 boats at this years party.

I first want to thank all who both attended and who helped out with throwing the party over the last 15 years and it's been a great run. I can't thank The Swing Crew enough for playing all 15 years of it. It's been a great 15 years, no deaths, no major incidents (well maybe the port-a-potty going over was major), and not a single rain date. I don't know of a single party that has that kind of record.

With a floating sand volleyball court, 1000 boats, and only 6 incidents the police responded to, I can't think of a better way to go out. All great athletes hope they go out at the top of their game and I feel this time is now for me.

So that said it's time for me to step down. I say every year that I'm never throwing it again and about December usually cave into pressure but this time it is final. For once it's time to think about what is best for me and not worry about others. It's been a great joy to me to bring happiness to so many people for a day each summer but it's also come at a considerable personal sacrifice. I have already thanked both the FWA and the Lake County Marine Unit for their assistance over the years and informed them of my decision and this year it is my final answer.

The party all started as a simple idea to give us a reason to get all of my friends together at least once each summer and listen to our favorite band The Swing Crew. If you're measured by the friends you have and company you keep them I must be the wealthiest man in the world because I couldn't ask for better ones. Many of them still drive hours to come to the party knowing that I will maybe have an hour or two to spend with them and that I will be one grumpy guy most of the weekend. But they still come anyways and they do have a great time without me. Many of the new friends I have met because of the party I'm also extremely thankful for and some I run into often and others only at the party.

But the party has turned into something different, and although it's great knowing that I provide so many people with the best (and safest) boating party they go to all summer, it's not something that I need to be happy in my life. I've never been one for the spotlight and as most of you know I usually hide out as much as I can at my own party.

Hosting this party has turned into both an emotional and financial burden on myself and on my company, not to mention a huge liability. The hours I spend planning and dealing with everything both take away from my business and my personal time of which I have very little anyways. My business consumes 80+ hours per week 8-9 months per year and I slack off to 50+ hours over the summer. It's no longer fair to my employees to take off so much time when they seldom take any vacation themselves. Someone may be able to pull it off with far less planning, worrying, and work then what I do but with the record we've had I wouldn't have done it any different.

The Fun on the Fox people are the ones who made it happen the last couple years. Without meeting all of you and your assistance and encouragement I would have stopped it when I got through the unlucky #13. Unfortunately I should have delegated more to you but that's a character flaw in my personality and part of being a "pleaser" as someone put it. I'll almost always put the burden on myself instead of others.

My other main concern is the safety and liability issues at hand with that many boaters and that many people drinking. Over the 15 years I have seriously lucked out. Legally I shouldn't have to worry about it as I'm only providing a band and it's not a private event. But in our sue happy world I'm sure I would be the one taken to court if anything did happen. And morally anyone who really knows me will tell you that if something major were to happen that it would weigh heavily on me.

I will decide what to do with the party and I hope someone will carry it on or I may partner with someone on it and I'm sure I'll have plenty of offers. I will weigh out the options and probably make a decision by the end of the year. But I'm no longer going to be the go to guy that is responsible for it and the guy the FWA or Lake County goes to for anything. I'll gladly pick up the band and bring them out as always but other than that I want to be able to once see what it's like to just show up and party like everyone else and enjoy it without worries.

It's gotten to the point now where someone could easily commercialize it and probably make a good chunk of change off it but that's also something I never had any interest in doing. It should also be a much easier party to throw in the future with all of the preemptive planning and work that both myself and the Fun on the Fox members did the last couple of years along with the assistance that the FWA and Lake County Marine Unit have provided. I also have a list of things that we should have done this year and that should be done next year to make sure other problems don't arise.

But it's also gotten to the point now where event insurance in the millions should probably be carried by whoever is throwing it even if the FWA does not require it.

I hope if the party moves forward that they respect that the party started with the Swing Crew and should continue with them until they also decide to step down. They are the perfect band for this event as they play the music that everyone can enjoy. It would probably be smart next year to get a radio station involved as well as some serious PA equipment but both of these may start requiring more permits and something I again did not want to get involved in.

My experience, wisdom, thoughts, whatever you may call it will be at the disposal of whoever I, the FWA, and Lake County can decide might be able to take it over. I would not pass it on without first consulting with them on it.

It's been a great run and a great honor to be the host of this party for the last 15 years. Lots of good laughs, lots of good music, and for sure lots of good friends.

Thank you all!

Rodney McManamy