

*The following story is from the West Bend News, May, 2002:*



## LAST WEEK'S PHOTO

Last week's photo was from May 2, 2002, and was named "Christmas Parade." I expressed surprise that a photo taken in May had something to do with Christmas, but it turns out that it really does take that long to plan a Christmas parade.

We got our first clue when eagle-eyed Daily News ad sales maven Mary Jones pointed out that one of the heads in the back row of the photo appears to be Daily News publisher Heather Rogge—specifically, the head second from the right in the back row.

I asked Heather about this, and she confirmed that it was indeed her head, although she says she wasn't the publisher then—Steve Ciccantelli was publisher. She said she thinks in May 2002, she was general manager of the Washington

County Post (it was called the Sunday Post back then). Being in the photo, I figured she would be able to help us identify everyone in the photo—which she was, with a not-insignificant amount of help from Josephine Minskey Brzezinski, apparently. Get ready for a heaping helping of names: From left, front row, Robbie Robrahn (as Santa), Jeff Szukalski, Josephine Minskey Brzezinski, Cesar Suarez and Mike Husar; back row, Julie Sears, Steve Ciccantelli, Mary Gamerdinger, Mary Husar Martin, Theresa Fuerbring, Heather Rogge and Carole Klotz.

So what are they doing here, posing for a Christmas event on what is probably a fairly warm day, one of them wearing a full Santa suit that is presumably dripping with more sweat than John Goodman's bike shorts?

So here's what happened: In February 2002, the West Bend Area Chamber of Commerce announced it was looking for someone to take over the annual Christmas parade. The Chamber had run the parade for 13 years, and at present it has been a tradition for more than 80 (if my math is correct, and there's a good chance it isn't).

So a parade committee was formed to start running the event. It was made up of local business leaders, and was co-chaired by Josephine Minskey of Lakeshore Newspapers (the company that includes the Daily News and Washington County Post) and Mary Gamerdinger of the Downtown West Bend Association.

They set up a fundraiser, the Jingle Bell Open golf event, which is still being run to this day—this year's event is Aug. 7 at West Bend Lakes Golf Course. This year's parade is scheduled for Nov. 26.

So there you have it—and apparently, even though this photo depicts an uncommon circumstance, it is not strange for the planning of the parade to begin that early. Heck, it's not even May yet and they already have information for the Jingle Bell Open and this year's parade online. Don't believe me? Go to [www.westbendparade.org](http://www.westbendparade.org) and get ready to eat crow, weirdly skeptical hypothetical reader.

—Chris Becker