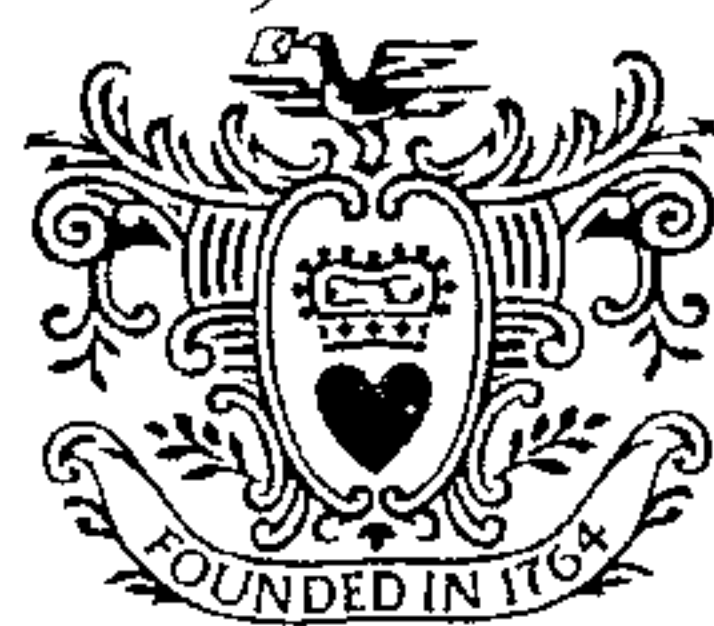


The Hartford Courant.



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EDITORIALS

A Fitting Tribute To Twain

Organizers of Hartford's Mark Twain Days produced a masterpiece on Labor Day weekend. They proved that the hugely popular event has the potential to become Central Connecticut's signature cultural event, similar in prestige to the annual Newport Jazz Festival in Rhode Island.

Twain Days' officials estimate that 100,000 people attended the three-day festival, capped by a stunning fireworks display that drew up to 40,000 people.

To achieve national status, the event must come up with reliable annual funding. This year's budget was \$500,000. The state kicked in \$300,000 and the city \$50,000. Several corporations provided support: The Hartford Insurance Group, which sponsored the fireworks, gave \$50,000; MassMutual Financial Group, \$25,000; and Sovereign Bank, \$25,000.

One possible way to provide long-term financing would be to find a national sponsor.

The Twain Days committee made a smart

move this year when it hired Riverfront Recapture to run the festival. Riverfront has an excellent track record of drawing large crowds to major events along the Connecticut River. Riverfront showed that it was up to the task of handling Twain Days, held at a series of venues extending from the river's edge to the Mark Twain House.

The choice of Labor Day weekend also proved a wise decision. This year's event drew roughly 30,000 more people than a year ago, when it was held in early August.

Geraldine Sullivan, president of the Twain Days committee, says people travel from all over

the world to visit the famous writer's house in Hartford, yet many state residents have never been there. "We want to make people in Hartford realize what a treasure we have," she says.

One possible goal for next year: Connect the festival with schools in the region to encourage students to read Mark Twain's books, and thereby help foster a greater love for reading.

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