

2010 Thresher show closes down another year



Ivan Kemp (center) is so busy working at the show he is dirty from head to toe. He is giving a ride to Elsa Craig Burr and Joseph Melton.

Thresher queen honored at show

The 2010 Tri-State Engine and Thresher Show Queen was named on Thursday at the thresher grounds in Bird City. Kathleen Faber Smith O'Neal, daughter of John and Artie Smith Faber, was honored with the title.

Each year residents are given clues to the queen's identity in the Bird City Times prior to the crowning, so the announcement is a surprise to some but not to others.

Hal Sager had the honor of introducing the queen and giving a brief synopsis of her history with the thresher show.

Kathleen was born at the family home near Campbell, Neb. When she was about 3 years old she, her parents and her older brother Jack Faber moved to a farm in rural Rawlins County owned by Artie's relatives.

Kathleen attended school at Pleasant View District 56, in Rawlins County, through the eighth grade. Then she attended high school in Colby. Much of that time she boarded with the Irving and Minnie Belle Imhoff family.

After high school she married and remained in Colby. She is mother to: Mike Smith, Nancy Arendt, LJ O'Neal, Heidi Haffner, and John O'Neal. She has eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Kathleen's dad, John Faber, participated in the show when it first began on the Kite farm. His Townsend tractor has been recognized for never missing a show. It is now shown by her nephew Johnny Faber and his family.

Kathleen first brought her youngest son John B, to the show more than 30 years ago. She sold Watkins products in the Number One building while John became one of Gerald Wright's engine boys. The blacker John could get, the happier he was. Kathleen never seemed to mind having all that coal dust in their little camper. As John's enthusiasm grew, more of her family became involved.

After John's death in 1996, his brothers acquired the 1908 Nichols and Shepard Steam Engine. It was restored by her sons, LJ O'Neal and the late Mike Smith. Their children Matt Smith of Tonganoxie, Marcy Smith Neff of Alva, Okla., and Lacy O'Neal of Colby are involved in operating it.

Kathleen says the harvest time she remembers didn't involve anyone dressed very fancy. The women worked hard and provided meals to the men and the harvest help. They had hired men who came from Texas who would sleep on a straw mattress and shower in the wash house...if the wind blew enough to run the windmill to fill the tank.

"I'm sorry if you thought of a Thresher Queen as someone all duded up fancy," said the new queen.

Queen Kathleen gave the following description of what a harvest queen meant to her: A woman who rolled up her sleeves in everyday cloths of, skirt and shirt waist or perhaps a gingham dress and apron. A sun bonnet to go out in the middle of a hot sunny day. This was her royal duty to milk the cows and then do farm yard chores early, early. Then to cook a big breakfast of pancakes, eggs, sausage and coffee.

Next came dinner to make when the men were threshing, or if close enough they came



2010 Thresher Queen Kathleen O'Neal

to the house. Fried chicken was a popular meal, picked and cleaned fresh every day, potatoes, gravy and a vegetable of some kind. The meal ended with a dessert of pie or cake, maybe home-canned fruit with home-made cookies. All this while keeping track of the kids and keeping them busy and happy all day long.

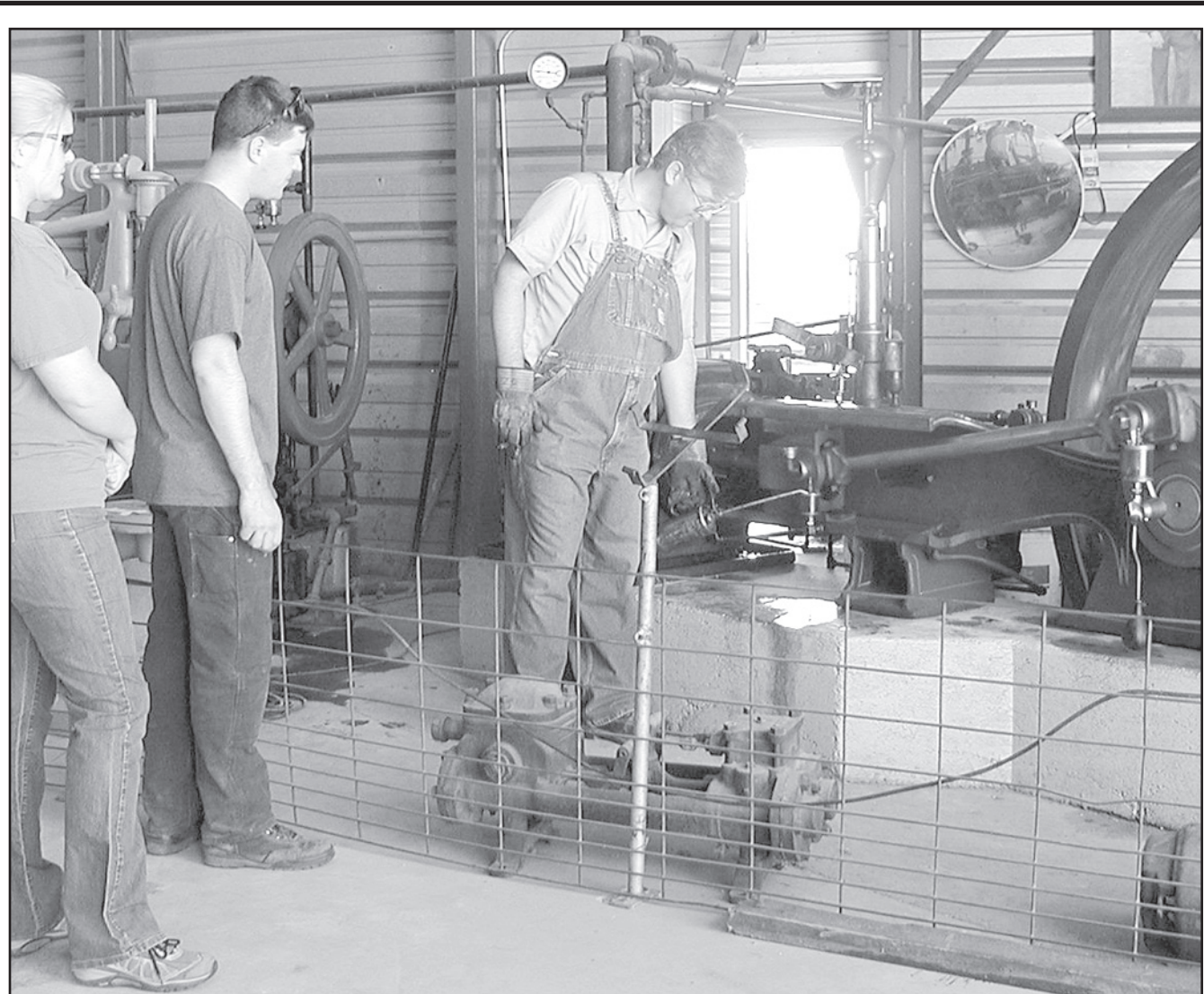
The evening chores of feeding pigs, milking cows which included separating milk and feeding calves and of course then supper might be hash browned potatoes made from leftovers at lunch and meat of some kind.

She said the women would end the day with a shower, if they didn't forget to fill the 50 gallon barrel on top of the outdoor building used for showers. Fifty gallons was shared by all and was some times cold and always quick so there would be enough for all. Snakes really liked the building and were always reluctant to leave.

"I really didn't do much of these things because I was one of the kids," she said.

"Thank you for the honor given to me to share what a queen really is like. "God bless and keep you all."

She ended by saying "I wave this dish towel, the signal used to say, the food is ready, or you need to come to the house."



Lynn Osborn (right) from Denver is busy oiling up the Corliss Steam Engine while his son, Paul (center) and Paul's wife visit with Dad. The family has been involved with the Thresher show for many years.

Times photo by Norma Martinez.

Thresher show — a family affair

Lynn Osborn from Denver Colo., and his son, Paul Osborn, who is stationed in the Army in Fairbanks, Alaska, attended the Tri-State Antique Engine and

Thresher Show. Paul and his wife took a two-week leave just to come for the show. The first time Paul came was right after graduating from flight school. He is a

helicopter pilot.

Lynn has been coming for 11 years, as he takes his two-week vacation to come and get the machine running for the show. Lynn oils up a

Corliss Steam engine which shows up in text books in about 1929. This machine drove many different belts to various machines in a feather duster factory in Iowa.



THRESHER PRINCESS, Mikaela Grace, was driving a Farmall tractor at the show. Right, Tony Howard, St. Francis, demonstrated the art of making knives.

Herald staff photos by Norma Martinez.

