

Cheyenne County celebrates July 4th

By Norma Martinez
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The fourth Cheyenne County July Fourth celebration in Bird City was a big success, in spite of the rainout for the fireworks. The weather was hot, in the high 90-100 degree temperatures all day, from the start up to just before time for the fireworks. The fireworks were all set up, and Randy Smestad, the DJ, was entertaining everyone with his recorded western music. As the evening progressed, the winds came up, temperatures began dropping, and dark clouds began to form.

Just before dusk and the time to start the fireworks presentation it began to lightning, and then a cloud burst of rain. Everyone ran for cover in their cars parked around the field, and the fire department scurried around to rescue the fireworks in order to keep them dry. It stopped for awhile, and suddenly started up again until the fire department drove around with their speakers announcing the fireworks had been called off due to the rain. Just as fast as the rain started, it stopped as everyone was leaving.

This was disappointing to everyone that was all psyched up to see the 40 minutes of fireworks, but everyone left without complaining, and as it turned out, Saturday evening was a perfectly beautiful evening, with no wind, and temperatures enough to enjoy sitting on the benches and in their comfortable folding chairs. Saturday's showing brought a lot of the St. Francis crowd and others to totally fill up the bleachers and empty spaces for parking cars. The fireworks were beautiful and well synchronized with the patriotic music, and well worth waiting for.

The Cheylin Pep Squad members donated their time and proceeds from selling water, homemade cookies, and treats towards paying for the fireworks. Setting up for two nights instead of one, they almost sold out. The Danken-brings parked there snack shack between the Thresher show buildings, selling pulled pork sandwiches on Friday, Sloppy Joes on Saturday, and Bratwursts both nights. It doubled their proceeds by expanding to two nights.

Friday's day began at 10 a.m. in front of the fire station, where firemen took turns giving children and any of the interested adults rides in their new Pumper Spartan Fire Truck, and testing out the horn and siren. Next, they boarded a big military 6X6 truck, and the Shriner's antique fire truck driven by Ken Beougher, giving rides to anyone who wanted one. Rod Klepper had lots of fun entertaining the younger children by driving them around in the barrel train.

The horseshoe tournament brought in seven teams. John and Theresa Martinez from Brighton were first place winners, Willy and Carol Martinez second, and Ray Martinez and William Bohanon came in third.

Devon Janicke, draped with a flag themed cloak, and Tucker Burr, in his red, white, and blue

top hat lead the parade. The kids, dressed in red, white, and blue, walked or rode around the park on their scooters, trikes, bikes and a peddle car.

The hot dog eating contest drew a big crowd of spectators. Joseph Augusta, Miguel Gonzales, Isabelle Gabaldon, John Martinez and Kouper McQuigg stuffed down hot dogs on plain buns, first soaking them in water. The first place winner, who took home a case of hotdogs, was Miguel Gonzales, who was working on his seventh hot dog when Kouper McQuigg dropped out after eating six. Christian Gabaldon dropped out just before McQuigg.

Twelve adults from age 17 up, including Cody Beeson, lined up for the Adult division. Uriah Williams, last year's champion from Hays, lost to winner Chris McQigg from St. Francis. Second place was John Sammonos from Goodland. The other contestants who gave it a fair shot were: Ivan Kemp, Devon Janicke, John Horan from Indianapolis, Indiana, James Gurule from Denver, Elias Grant from Harmony, Minnesota, Phillip Ramsey from Minnesota, Chris Malone from Arlington, Texas and Cody Skaggs from Conifer, Colo.

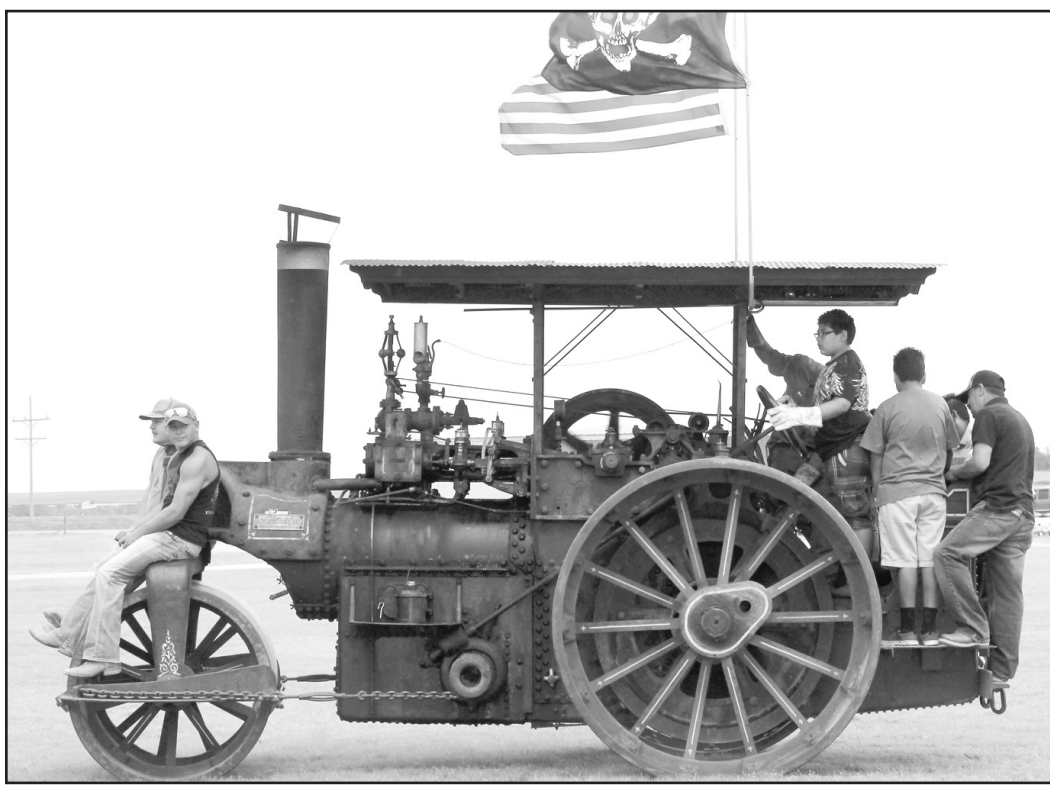
The All-American hot dog meal, consisting of hot dogs, chips, watermelon, and a cookie, was almost a sellout. The free swimming brought in a full crowd, with many coming and going. The custom cutter workers, some from other countries, and some from various other states, along with the many visitors from out of state, enjoyed cooling off in the pool throughout the day.

Cindy Burr announced the judges first place winner of the best decorated yard. The winner of the Bird City Bucks' went to Mark and Cathy Loop, who had lots of focal points in their decorated yard. Second place was Canda Orten, whose yard was done simply with flags aligning the side walk and stars painted on the grass. About two dozen yards were decorated with flags and a few red, white, and blue flowers. Willy and Carol Martinez had Uncle Sam staked out to oversee the passers by.

The Sing-a-long was very well prepared by Dan Carson, who directed the patriotic songs accompanied by Trish Willis at the piano. Folleh Shar Tamba, a marine veteran, was the guest speaker. He talked about his experiences being deployed four times to Iraq in his eight years as a Marine. He is an artist who has a display 'What is War' in the old Assembly of God Church in St. Francis. He has used his talents in art to show other veterans how they can use their experiences in a positive way.

To end the Sing-a-long, Devon Janicke presented a cake with tall star shaped candles, as everyone sang Happy Birthday. Everyone then enjoyed the cake and ice cream.

In the evening, Gerald and Phyllis Wright were in the Sod House at the Thresher grounds to answer questions for those who



Above, Chris McQuigg won the hot dog eating competition held in Bird City Friday afternoon. Chris is pictured at the end of the table. Cody Beeson stood next to him amongst the 12 competitors. Left, JD Hawkins hitches a ride on the antique steam engine during the festivities. Below, Kouper McQuigg tries his hardest to scarf down another hot dog while competing against Miguel Gonzales. Miguel beat him out, winning the 'under 17' hot dog eating contest.

toured the old Country Church and School house.

The younger and older children had lots of fun, running around with their fingers all lit up by the red and blue finger lights, sold at the Cheylin Cheer Squad concession stand. Rex Weishaple was giving rides on the 1924 Buffalo Springfield Steam Roller up until dusk.

If they offered a prize to the family who brought in the most invited guests to help Cheyenne County celebrate, it would have gone to Phil and Becky Palumbo. They had 28 guests from the Denver area, and two from Indiana park their campers and vans in their yard. They came just to enjoy the Cheyenne County Fourth of July celebration with their Bird City friends, and as a reward, they met many new Bird City friends.



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