

Gift of the Waters - 60 years

by Joe Sovia

This weekend marks the 60th anniversary of the Gift of the Waters Historical Indian Pageant with activities scheduled for Hot Springs State Park.

Highlight of the pageant is a play at 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at the Big Spring commemorating the deeding of Indian land by Shoshone Chief Washakie to the people of Wyoming.

Big Spring has been known by Indian performers as Bah-gue-wana, or Smoking Water.

Other weekend events include a pageant parade, the Kiwanis Arts & Crafts Fair, fiddler and acoustic music, Kiwanis buffalo burgers and brats, run/walk and community dance. It's important to note there is no admission charge to the pageant and related events.

The multi-scene pageant play features verse and music showing how Washakie gave the waters to his white brothers. Members of the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes will be part of the pageant, which features dancing in colorful Indian costumes. The tract of land now known as Hot Springs State Park originally belonged to the Shoshone and Arapaho Indians.

Within the boundaries of the land were several hot mineral springs known for their healing powers. Big Spring, the largest hot medicinal spring in the world, flows 18,600,000 gallons of water every 24 hours at a temperature of 135 degrees F. The pool is about 35 feet in diameter. The hot water flows into cooling ponds from Big Spring.

Negotiations were carried on in the early 1890s to get the Shoshone and Arapaho Indians to agree to deed part of the Wind River In-

dian reservation land to the U.S. government, which included the Big Horn Hot Spring. When the agreement, or treaty, was reached in 1896, Washakie was the first to sign. The second was Sharp Nose, an Arapaho. Alternately, members of both tribes signed.

They received about \$60,000 worth of cattle and food supplies in return. It was noted that Washakie said after he signed the deed, "I have given you the spring; my heart feels good."

The treaty was ratified by the government and a one-mile tract of land embracing all the springs was given to the State of Wyoming and it was made a state park. The town of Thermopolis was moved six miles south to its present site - adjoining the Big Horn Hot Spring.

In 1899, the Wyoming Legislature set aside one-fourth of the water of the Big Spring for free use and in later years a camping spot was reserved for Indians.

History of the pageant

Although this is the 60th year of the Gift of the Waters Pageant, the event began in 1925. It was stated in the Independent Record that Marie Montabe Savary Lindstrom wrote the pageant script for the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) state convention.

That original pageant featured Chief Charlie Washakie, according to the newspaper. Brilliantly colored feathers, lavish beading and jingling bells were worn.

The DAR and Lindstrom had no intention for the pageant to be re-enacted year after year; it was not revived until 1949, when it was decided to hold the pageant every summer in Thermopolis.

Horsemen rode down a steep trail down the hillside behind the "Smoking Waters."

Pageant-related activities

Weekend events begin Saturday at 7 a.m. with a 5K and 10K walk/run at Hot Springs State Park.

The kiddie parade begins at 9:45 a.m. at Bicentennial Park. The main parade, set for a 10 a.m. start, has a new route due to construction on Broadway Street. The parade line-up is along Fourth Street between Amoretti and Warren streets; the procession goes west on Warren, north on Sixth, east on Broadway, north on Fifth, east on Arapahoe and finishes along Senior Avenue.

Another change for this year is that the Indian dancing right after the parade will be held at the intersection of Arapahoe and Springview streets due to the construction.

The Kiwanis Arts & Crafts Fair is featured in the vicinity of the state park pavilion Saturday and Sunday. Held in conjunction will be a music show both days, filled with fiddler and acoustic performances. Kiwanis buffalo burgers and brats will be sold Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Persons attending the pageant Saturday and Sunday evening should note that handicapped parking will be available. Ask at the barricade for handicapped parking locations.

To wrap up Saturday's activities, Mac's Bar sponsors a dance featuring country rock band Undecided from 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the park pavilion. There will be a beer garden and identification will be required.

See the complete schedule of events on page 9.

Mmmm, nothing like cotton candy



Maile McCumber, 2, munches on a big helping of cotton candy and a little bit of hair during the Family Fun Night on July 28 during the Hot Springs County Fair. Children from around the county got to try out inflatable rides during the night and grown-ups experienced delectable treats, such as turkey legs, during the warm July evening. — J.D. Stetson photo

Community rallies for families

by J.D. Stetson

Katie Ferree had no idea what was going through her head Friday night during the Junior Livestock Auction.

She knew she was selling a pig, and the proceeds would help her friends' families. But she honestly didn't know what to think as bid after bid came in for the animal.

It was that exact moment where the community came together to take care of its own that dumbfounded the youth as she stood there with the pig.

The community suffered a double-whammy earlier in the week after one of Ferree's best friends, Baylee Dickinson, died at her home and when 9-year-old Jeremy Gibbel suffered an extensive burn to his back after a kitchen accident.

"Baylee was just a kind person," Ferree said. "I hope this helps to bring them (her fam-

ily) peace."

During the livestock sale, auctioneer Verne Lofink told the crowd what Ferree had done. She donated the pig to both families, and proceeds would be split in half between them.

Bid after bid came in until Red Rock Family Practice and Don's IGA got the final price of \$3,944. Right afterward, ConocoPhillips announced it would also donate \$1,600 to the cause.

The support the community provided also amazed the Gibbel family while they were away.

Jeremy just returned home Monday night after a week-long stint in the Northern Colorado Medical Center and the Western States Burn Center.

He's doing well at home and is comfortable in familiar surroundings with family and friends, his father John Gibbel said.

Jeremy's father hadn't heard much about the event that took

place at the fair, but he reassured the community the fair had been on Jeremy's mind the entire time he was in the hospital.

"He was more upset about not showing his animals at the fair than he was with his injuries," the elder Gibbel said.

"He was so excited about the fair this year," said his mother, Shawna Gibbel. "Thinking about his chickens and his rabbits kept his mind off of the experience."

The Gibbels know they aren't the only ones in need, and are still amazed with the community and how it has dealt with its tragedies in the past week.

"I want the community to know, that after five years of living here, that now I know we were meant to be here," Shawna said.

For results of the Junior Livestock Auction, see page 12 of this issue.

Downtown speed limit goes to 20 mph

by J.D. Stetson

Starting Sept. 1, people who go 30 mph through downtown will have to slow down.

The Thermopolis Town Council unanimously approved the final reading of an ordinance that lowers the speed limit from 30 mph to 20 mph on Broadway Street between Sixth Street and Third Street, and on Arapahoe Street between Sixth Street and Senior Avenue. The cross streets between Broadway and Arapahoe also will have lower speeds.

The council met with some opposition to the ordinance as it was written from community member Dave Huber.

Huber did not disagree that the speed limit should be lowered during business hours, Monday through Friday, but he questioned whether it should be 20 mph at all hours.

"I just don't see your reasoning," Huber said as he

pointed out the lack of activity and cars located on the streets at the time of the 7 p.m. council meeting.

Mayor Bill Malloy pointed out it makes sense for the speed limit to simply be active all the time because most people don't go 30 mph downtown anyway.

He also said there will be a period of adjustment after the speed limit change is enacted where officers may give reminders or warnings instead of a speeding citation.

Former mayor Steve Shay also attended the meeting and questioned whether the new ordinance would give officers a pretext late at night to pull over people for other crimes.

While he made his comments known, he did not object vehemently to the ordinance and agreed speeds needed to be lowered in the area to protect pedestrians and others during the daytime hours.

BLM managing 2.2 million acres of public land



Michael Bies talks about preserving the Legend Rock Petroglyphs during a recent tour hosted by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. — J.D. Stetson photo

by J.D. Stetson

On private land, only the landowner can decide what can take place on his or her property.

Public land is a different story. A government entity usually decides what activities take place, but that doesn't mean individuals can't have a say in what regulations the entity may choose for each individual parcel.

Every 20 years, local field offices of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management must update a resource management plan.

The plan is a guideline for how the BLM will specifically manage each piece of public land under its jurisdiction.

Whether you hunt, raise cattle or work in the oilfield on public land, a new plan could affect a variety of activities.

Now's the time to start thinking about any changes that need to be done with how the BLM handles its lawful mandate in Hot Springs County and the Big Horn Basin.

Officials plan to release a draft resource management

plan in January, and the public will have 90 days to submit comments to be incorporated into the plan.

In the meantime, workers from both the Worland and Cody field offices have hosted tours to explain potential impacts of the proposed plan to members of the public and explain what comments would be the most useful during the public comment period.

For more information about the plan, call the Worland Field Office at (307) 347-5100 or visit www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/field_offices/Worland.html.

Residents also can contact the Hot Springs County Commission with regard to the plan. The commissioners work closely with the BLM to develop the plan, commissioner John Lumley said.

Here are some topics the plan will deal with that may apply to you:

If you have a favorite hunting or fishing area, the bureau has designated certain large, contiguous parcels of land as a "Hunter Management

Area." The designated area allows the BLM to promote hunting as well as protect it from other activities that may hamper hunting or recreation.

Other spots outside of the hunter management area may have areas of public land mixed with private land. Promoting those areas would be tantamount to promoting trespassing, said Paul Rau, BLM recreation speaker, during a recent tour.

The BLM also has a program in place to buy or trade parcels of private land that are contiguous with recreation areas in exchange for areas the BLM owns that would benefit the landowner. But because of the various other duties the BLM does, the process is very slow, Rau said.

If you enjoy horseback or hiking trips into wilderness areas, then there may be a few places closer to home that you can enjoy. While these areas are technically not wilderness, they may have wilderness characteristics that the bureau thinks

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