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Residents gather for Belmont Old Home Day



By BOB MARTIN

BELMONT- A little rain couldn't keep away crowds of residents who flocked to the Main Street and Mill Street areas for a day full of activities during Belmont Old Home Day.

The day started at 7:30 a.m. with a pancake breakfast at the Tioga Pavilion. Following a flag raising ceremony runners took to the street for the 48th Belmont 10-Mile Road Race and the 28th annual Tioga

Fun Run. There was also the second Cow Pie 10-Mile Relay Race.

Starting at 10 a.m. there were children's games and a pedal tractor pull near the library. People had the chance to dance around on the grass near the beautifully restored bandstand to the sounds of the band King Chrome.

All around the village there were vendors offering all kind of food and crafts. There was wood carving, novelties, music books and more. At the Belmont Library there were exhibits by the Belmont Heritage Commission and Historical Society throughout the day and at St. Joseph Church vendors were selling baked goods and crafts.

The day also included a parade down Main Street and a chicken barbecue dinner at the fire station. There were evening events at Bryant Field, such as a rock wall, a live performance by B Street Bombers and fireworks by Atlas.

Balloon Artist Olivia Tatro is 10-years-old was also on-hand much to the delight of the children in the area. Tatro explained that she has been making balloon art since she was only six-years-old and has shown her skills at events in Meredith and her hometown of Moultonborough, as well as Belmont Old Home Day.

Tatro's mother Donna works at the Moultonborough Parks and Recreation Department and she said she helped set her up at events selling crafts and making the balloon art.

Tatro said she bought a balloon book when she was young and did a lot of practicing over the past few years. She can make all kinds of animals and even a guitar.

The Friends of Belmont Football were also selling food at Old Home Day. President Eric Shirley and other members of the organization were quesadillas and lemonade to the public. The organization relies on fundraising endeavors like this to gain the funds needed to be used to be a joint team with Gilford High School. Others include selling Christmas trees and host a summer party.

Shirley said there are 12 students in the football program. He said he expects interest to remain from students in Belmont, and may even grow now that young athletes know they have the opportunity to play varsity football.

"We started probably five years ago with a dream for Belmont kids to have a place to play football," said Shirley. "This is the first year Belmont kids can play varsity and it is the Gilford/Belmont team. The agreement that we have is that our group has to raise \$15,000 a year to fund Belmont's portion of the program."

He said the first year was a struggle, as they were barely able to make their goal. Now Shirley said people have been more than willing to support the program and that things were going very well on Saturday.

"It's not easy every year but we definitely make our mark," said Shirley. "We are at the point now where we are raising more so we can make a little bit of a bank."

Ken Knowlton and Mark Padula had a stand set up with a large sign that said "Save our Gale School." Knowlton explained that they are trying to keep the Gale School alive and they were selling t-shirts and raffle tickets to work toward their goals. They said it was especially beneficial to be at Old Home Day, as an anonymous donor came to them and offered his services for all the form, footing and floor work to get the building moved. Now they just have to pay for concrete.

"He was just walking by," said Padula. "I almost hugged him I was so happy. That's really what we need."

Knowlton said they had a number of children who came by and were interested in the Gale School and even offer up funds. At this past town meeting, the Gale School was saved from being raised when the town approved an advisory non-binding motion that authorized the Shaker Regional School District to transfer the building to the Save Our Gale School Committee and relocate it to school district property at Concord Street and Memorial Drive.

"The issue's not dead," said Knowlton. "I wouldn't even consider it dying. We need to collect as much money in the process."

Students Belmont High School's Class of 2017 were selling food in an effort to raise funds for their school trip. Currently they are thinking of going to Florida, a cruise or traveling to New York. It all depends on how much each trip will cost and how much they raise.

The students are also have a mattress fundraiser where a company comes into the high school and sells brand new mattresses, and give a portion of the proceeds to the class. This will be at Belmont High School on Oct. 16 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The trip will take place at the end of the school year.

"My favorite one to make is an elephant," said Tatro.

Former Chief Rick Siegel was manning the fried dough station where he and other members of the fire department were selling food for its relief association. The relief association distributes to funds to injured firefighters to help defray medical costs, donates to the Greater Lakes Region Children's Auction and assists families around Thanksgiving and the holidays.

Siegel said he was happy to be out at old home day serving up food to residents.

"I'm a retired fire chef who learned how to cook fried food," said Siegel.
