

Crowd of Thousands Savors Independence Day Traditions in Curtis

Curtis: From page 1
 organizer Captain Bill Kelly. With his wife, Lorraine, and a small team of volunteers, Mr. Kelly has pulled the parade together for 35 years. "The place was packed, as usual," Mr. Kelly said Monday, July 6. "We were quite pleased with it."
 While uncounted parade entries began lining up on Sandtown Road east of town about an hour and a half before the procession stepped off at 12:30 p.m., hundreds of spectators took advantage of the opportunity to enjoy the Curtis Lions Club's "Famous Chicken Barbecue" near Curtis Park, where 675 whole chickens were slow-roasted over charcoal, 100 birds at a time, and served with coleslaw and potato salad to families waiting for the show to begin. More than 1,400 chicken dinners were served through the course of the day.

Music was a highlight of the celebration. The Curtis community shows particular appreciation for its marching bands, offering free hot dogs, soda pop, and potato chips to band performers at the end of the long parade route at Curtis Park, before inviting each group to perform on the park lawn throughout the afternoon. This year, participating musical groups were the Royal Canadian Legion band of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, the Newman League Cadet Corps #30, the City of Sault Ste. Marie Pipe Band, the Kalamazoo Pipe Band, Newberry High School Band, and the St. Ignace Saints of Steel drum band, playing atop a flatbed semi-truck.
 After the parade, large crowds gathered beneath the birch trees at Curtis Park to enjoy a craft fair, inflatable playground equipment, food and beer tents, and concerts.

The Newman League Cadet Corps and the Royal Canadian Legion Band each performed marching numbers on the lawn, followed by bagpipe music by the Kalamazoo Pipe Band. The Kalamazoo bagpipers were joined by the City of Sault Ste. Marie Pipe Band and the two groups played several songs together before the Sault pipers took center stage. The Saints of Steel band of St. Ignace closed out the afternoon of music by performing many steel drum songs from the park pavilion. The group also sold 30 of its CDs to the crowd to benefit school music programs in St. Ignace.
 Many along the parade route and in the park donated to the parade fund, said Mr. Kelly, and proceeds from the Independence Day celebration will benefit Lions Club programs in the community, including

an annual scholarship. The club also supports Northwoods Air Lifeline, a medical transport program operated by volunteer pilots. Northwood Air Lifeline owns two

light aircraft and a hangar at Iron Mountain, and had completed 2,200 missions through last year, said Mr. Kelly, a volunteer chairman for the program.

Fireworks over the lake at dusk concluded the Curtis Independence Day celebration.
See more Curtis celebration photographs, page 12.



The City of Sault Ste. Marie Pipe Band marches at Curtis Park following the parade. The group played on its own in the park and also joined the Kalamazoo Pipe Band for several songs.



Withstanding the heat and smoke in his outdoor kitchen, John Halpin (right) of Curtis shovels charcoal under 100 chickens on a rotisserie, while Lucas Abram, 11, of Curtis, squirts water as needed to keep the cooking flame low. Behind them, crowds are drawn by the scent of the barbecue to the Lions Club tent to enjoy Curtis' favorite Independence Day meal. More than 1,400 chicken dinners were served by the Lions Club Sunday, July 5.



The Ahmed Shriners delighted children along the Curtis parade route as they zipped along in their miniature cars, handing out candy and beads.



Hungry crowds line up for the Lions Club chicken barbecue as Jim Wells (left) of Curtis and Garland Seegert (right) of Germfask dole out the potato salad and rolls.



The Saints of Steel band rolls to a stop at the end of the parade route in Curtis. Along the route, band members took turns holding drums and equipment steady while others played. Crowds waiting at the park watched as the band finished a song atop the truck, then later performed a concert at the pavilion.

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Raffle To Aid School

The Fund the Future campaign is holding a raffle for a new 2009 V-8 Dodge Ram truck. All proceeds from the raffle will benefit the Les Cheneaux Community Schools district. Tickets for the raffle are available at many Les Cheneaux area businesses for \$25, or buy two and get one free. The truck is parked in front of the school in Cedarville.

The winning raffle ticket will be drawn during the 32nd annual Antique Wooden Boat Show in Hessel Saturday, August 8.

For more information, contact Fund the Future Chair Brianna Freel at the Port Dolomite branch of U.P. State Credit Union.