

LOCAL NEWS

Pancakes for breakfast, fireworks for dinner

By Douglas Farmer
Turley Publications Staff Writer

WALES — Those involved with the Wales Old Home Days festivities have set out to prove that you can reside in a small town and still have big-time fun. And from the annual parade and various craft vendors to competitions like frog jumping and tire burnout, Town Moderator Eric Esiason, the chairman of the Old Home Days Committee, said events are planned with the whole family in mind.

Wales Baptist Church will host the annual pancake breakfast on Saturday, Aug. 9 at 7:30 a.m. and a full program will continue from there through the parade at 10 a.m. from Tedore's Restaurant to the Wales Senior Center, the burnout contest at 2 p.m. in front of St. Monica Catholic Church, various kids races and the fireworks display at dusk.

Esiason said many of the activities and vendors remain consistent from one year to the next, although there were some additions this year. Last weekend, for example, a large mouth bass fishing derby was held at Lake George with various associated cash prizes. Esiason said the idea for the derby came from Robert Heygi, who broached the subject on local public access television.

Bands that have graced the fire department's stage at 7 p.m. have varied, although the local band Radio Ranch has become a regular, sponsored by the local and state cultural councils; and speaking of the fire department, the fire department's chicken barbecue at 5 p.m. is expected to be a big draw, said Esiason - tickets must be purchased in advance by visiting the transfer station during

regular hours or by calling Chief Paul Morin Jr. at 413-348-2291.

"The event draws people from Holland, Brimfield and Monson, although we've always tried to keep the small town feel, where everybody knows everybody," said Esiason. "It's hard to get enough volunteers, but we had a good core group this year."

Old Home Days were first held in 1903 and continued thereafter, though for the last half of the 20th century, sporadic involvement resulted in the virtual disappearance of the event.

And both Esiason and Pamela Bourque Smith credited the generosity and involvement of local businesses and organizations in making the Old Home Days a success, like Party Central in Palmer, Sturdy Tents of Brimfield, J. A. Fortier Ice Co. of Wales, local Boy Scouts and many others.

"We have a lot of novelty and food items but I've tried to grown it with a crafter's tent," said Smith. "And the library also has a wonderful book sale that they do every year."

Indeed, Wales Public Library Nancy Baer said this year's sale - that starts at 11 a.m. - will not only include a wide variety of books to choose from but will include the presence of several local authors, including Sandra Beaudry and Bette Decoteau of Wales and Danielle Koziol of Monson.

The day's festivities will begin with the pancake breakfast at 7:30 a.m., with the Old Home Days parade at 10 a.m., organized by Selectman Jeffrey Vannais

Wales Old Home Days continue Aug. 9

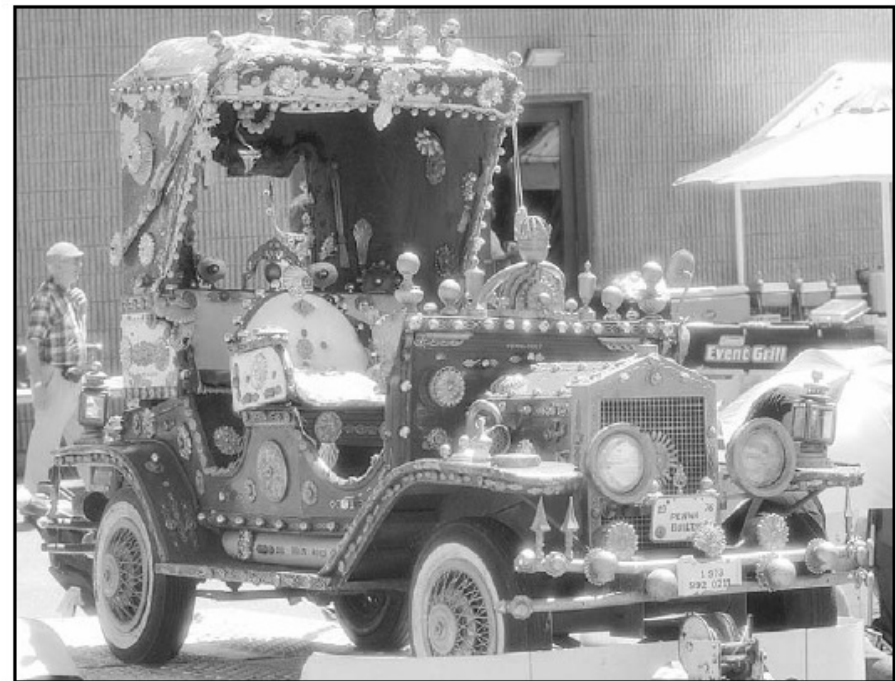
and including horses from Hollow Brook Farms and the Polish American Cavalry, antique cars and a slew of fire engines from area departments, with awards presented immediately after. At 11 a.m. the town wide tag sale and farmer's market will commence across the street from the Wales Baptist Church.

Contests like a cardboard boat race, frog jumping, ladder ball tourney, water balloon toss, tug-of-war and three-

legged races will occur throughout the afternoon and the burn-out contest (where vehicles are mounted on concrete blocks and wheels spun to create the largest cloud of smoke) will peel out at 2 p.m.

The fire department's barbecue will be held at 5 p.m. and young fiddle playing phenomenon Hunter Foote will take the fire department's stage at 6 p.m. and the fireworks will shoot off at dusk.

For more information, look at the Old Home Days Web site at www.walesohd.com.



Turley Publications file photo
This vehicle, originally made for a New Jersey department store, won an award in last year's parade.