

Brookside Centennial: *We did it!*

by Sue Cochran and Renee Bolkema

August 17, 2013, will go down in the history of Brookside as a very big day. We all got together and pulled off a Centennial Celebration to be proud of. Although it was pretty warm (OK, it was hot) we must keep in mind that it did not rain, snow, hail, flood or blow in a major dust storm. Weather conditions could have been a whole lot worse, right?

The day started off with Mass at the old St. Anthony's Church. Services were well attended and everyone present talked about the tears shed over seeing people that they hadn't seen for such a long time and how good it was to get everyone back together for a day of remembering days gone by. The bell at the church rang off and on all day to invite people to come join the gathering. Thanks to Frank and Janie Adamic and the Sons of Italy for all of the work done there.

When Mass ended, the Frank Adamic family and their helpers went to work to display some church-related memorabilia and set up some Bingo tables in the old church. Jim DiOrio shared a 1940 vintage stage backdrop with local advertizing that had been found in the basement of the old Italian Lodge decades ago. The ads all featured businesses from Canon City and Florence and the art work was wonderful. In the center was a painting of a cabin by a brook. Was the artist thinking of Brookside? Jim's expertise as a sign-painter helped him to know how to preserve the old backdrop. It looked great in the front of the church. Jim also made an appearance around town on his antique bicycles.

Classical guitarist Jim Bosse and his friend and helper Charles Ranns performed at a concert under the trees in Spring Creek Park. They had put together a special version of the mining song "Sixteen Tons" that featured snippets of Brookside history. There really was a day when the coal miners of Brookside "owed their soul to the company store".

Larry Green, railroad historian, was available at the park to talk to people about the part the Pueblo & Arkansas Valley Railway and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe played in our history. Larry has been searching company records for more information about the Brookside depot. Although he still hasn't found company documents telling us when we got our depot, he did find a mention of a boxcar body being removed from Brookside, and he found information in a book on depots that says we had an 8' by 28' boxcar serving as a depot/waiting room from 1889 till 1902. We have train schedules showing passenger service after that date, so I wonder what they did after they moved the boxcar?

Several of Fremont County's "Spirits of the Past" attended the Centennial Celebration in character of some of our early pioneers. I spoke to "Uncle Jesse Frazier" at lunch and he told me he had walked the four miles from his barn down toward Florence to attend. What fun. A big thanks to that group for weathering the heat in yesterdays' fashions, which were not necessarily designed for comfort.

Steve Cochran and Arlin Bolkema provided transportation around town in the form of a hay ride that connected the various venues every twenty or thirty minutes or so. We know for a fact that some people got on and rode just to be riding. Did everyone hear the story about the young gent who rode and rode and rode some more and had the good fortune to be the only passenger when the tractor ran out of gas? He grinned ear to ear as they walked to Steve's place for a can of gas.

Our Silent Auction to raise money to use as matching funds for a grant to put a new roof on the old church kept getting bigger and bigger till it was huge—over 100 items were offered. Local artist, Dave Merrick, donated several prints while Spring Creek Vineyard donated a case of Centennial wines. We hope everyone won the items they wanted most. The auction and donations raised \$3,287 toward a new roof for St. Anthony's.

The Bake Sale (we have some great bakers in Brookside!), Cake Walk, T-shirts, caps, beer mugs and wine glasses, and beverages sold paid for all the costs of the Centennial so that the Town ended in the black, budget-wise.

Lunch was provided by Atmos and Black Hills Energy and tasted mighty good. Jerrie McFadyen arranged for Rich Eurich and Charles Prignano to provide Italian music under the awning, and resident Reine Richardson sang for us and provided the sound system for the day. Mayor Dave Boden issued an official proclamation to the gathered masses and introduced a number of honored guests. Numerous door prizes added to the fun. Thanks to John Howard for the large tent, tables & chairs provided by Canon Rental!—We shoulda' got two tents!—We thank everyone who helped with the lunch. It was a good time breaking bread with friends.

Speaking of bread! Jana Schutte and friends got the new bread oven installed behind Town Hall in time to provide tastes of pizza and bread out of a real bread oven. Frank & Barb Carochi provided their expertise to teach others how we can use the oven in the future. I heard a lot of laughter back there whenever I passed by. The new Italian Bread Oven at the Community Center was paid for with donations and volunteer labor. Fund-raising is still needed to buy the brick to “dress” the oven. John and Mike Madone will do the brick work when we can afford the brick! Donations toward this can be accepted at the Town Clerk's office.

Thanks to the Sons of Italy, who did great work installing the two new bocce ball courts at Community Center and kept the competitions running all day! The Centennial Planning Committee met later that evening for sort of a mop-up meeting (that and the kegs weren't empty yet) and they played bocce ball till it got so dark they couldn't see the colors anymore.

Thanks to Steve and Sue Cochran who offered the Old-Time Tractor, Truck & Car display with an assortment of entries from various manufacturers; it was a definite hit! People wandered through all day, and several photographers spent time taking pictures of their favorites. *See, I told you guys if we all brought what we had, it would add up to an interesting line-up.*

We had a rock hound, Mark Wolkomir, at the park identifying rocks for kids. Dave Fuselier provided guides for the walking tour of the mine sites at the park. Head Start helped plan some children's activities to keep the younger set entertained, and the day's activities drew to a close with a water balloon fight. We were amused at how some of the kids loved the hayride, while one young lady decided she'd rather walk than get bounced around on a bale of straw behind a noisy old tractor.

Renee Bolkema, Town Clerk, had been gathering historic maps, photos and other documents for months to create a display inside Town Hall (where it was so nice and cool all day). We heard ooohs and ahhhhs all day long from people looking at this great historical collection. *(Renee wants to say a special thanks to Jerrie McFadyen, Jana Schutte, and Steve and Sue Cochran for being important members of the Centennial Celebration Team—Well done and many thanks!)*

Parking was at a premium most of the day, and Vic from Head Start & Cloyce & Nick Mann stood in the sun for hours directing traffic. It would have been chaos without them. Now that's a switch. Chaos usually reigns wherever Cloyce & Nick show up. ☺. Thanks for filling all of those water balloons, too! Oh, my!

OnWatch provided security for the event. The crew operating the “money machines” in Town Hall were kept busy all day. Again, their jobs made everybody else's jobs just that much easier.

Mayor Dave Bolkema and the Town Board have been busy all summer, shining up the Town for the event: helping to plan the event, mowing weeds, patching potholes, you name it!

We know we're missing someone or something, so we just want to throw a great big general “**Thank You**” out there to everyone (*over 50 volunteers, plus vendors*) who pitched in to do their part, and to all our guests who came to share our big day. Y'all come back now, ya hear?