

Annual Picnics at Wildwood

Wildwood was established as a recreational village. As such, the majority of owners are summer week-end residents who choose to enjoy the outdoors with their own families. And they have a lot of fun doing so. Consequently there is not a great amount of neighbor association. Sometimes we can go for years without seeing your next door neighbors.

This fact was recognized very early on and the association Board of Directors started an effort to bring the residents together to socialize using pot luck picnics as a means to bring us together. The original shelter or pavilion was mostly an open air shell with a roof over it. We generally had a gathering at Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day. In addition we would have our annual business meeting in October at the Aurora, Colorado Library.

There were numerous problems getting the people to participate. The first being that the families were getting away from the cities and wanted to be together. Secondly, the weather doesn't cooperate at Memorial Day time and it is generally quite cold and sometimes downright miserable. Couple this with an open shell pavilion with the wind blowing through it magnified the cold. So we dispensed with the Memorial Day picnic by the late eighties.

The Boards kept struggling with a way to get better participation. Several of us got together and added some walls on the west side of the pavilion. We built a brick barbeque grill inside at the southwest corner but were always afraid of starting the structure on fire since we used briquettes for fuel and was very smokey. We didn't have the nice barbeque grills that we have now. However that arrangement was used for many years until just a few years ago when some new modern gas barbeque grills were purchased. Faye Bills and Toby Kettleeson were the primary cooks for many of the years using the brick barbeque grill and briquettes. Larry Corvillia and Bill Hawthorne have been the primary cooks with the modern grills.

Dave Simpson and I built the red wood tables and Faye stained them at my home about 1989. Then we hauled them down to the pavilion. That helped to at least have something to eat on as early on we would just stand around and eat anywhere we could find to sit down. Some would bring their own chairs. That was twenty years ago and I noticed this year that they are getting a little wobbly and will need to be replaced soon. For many years we could only get about forty people to turn out. So the size of the pavilion was sufficient.

Major efforts were made by the various Boards to organize games and get more children participation. This required cutting the swamp grass west of the pavilion which in turn required purchase of a sickle type mower. It was unwieldy and required considerable more energy than people (generally the Board members or Caretaker) were willing to use so it fell into disuse. Anyway by the early nineties we were having various children games; sack races,

egg tosses etcetera. Prizes were awarded. Various Board members would get Corporate sponsored gifts. Gradually the family participation with more children increased.

In the late nineties, we got Joanne Johnson for a caretaker. She could play a base guitar. Faye Bills played an autoharp and could sing. I played a banjo and harmonica. Joanne rounded up a guitar player from Hartsel and we got a band up to entertain during the picnics. Pam Neu has a picture of her and Don Bennett dancing on the gravel street. Unfortunately I didn't get a copy of the picture in time for this publication.

As participation increased, the need for additional pavilion space increased. About year 2000, the Board budgeted for and had an extension built on the south side. Several truck loads of gravel were hauled in. I took my little John Deere tractor and scraper down and leveled it around the pavilion.

One of the problems we had that really plagued us over the years was the "mud-dauber" swallows. They would build their mud nests and make a huge mess all over the inside of the pavilion. It was a monumental effort to hose down the nests and try to clean up the building so that we could even use it for our picnics. This finally got resolved about 2007 when our caretaker, Art Allen fully enclosed the ceiling and built sliding doors all around so that the mud daubers are essentially locked out now. Electrical circuits were also extended throughout the pavilion. Thank you present Board of Directors and Art.

All of the many volunteer hours and pioneering efforts have given way to greatly improved participation and successful picnics for the last few years under the leadership of Cindy Hertz and the recent and current Boards of Directors.

This July 4th, 2009, was the best turnout in my memory. Participation has risen to over a hundred people. Ticket drawing gifts are being made and /or donated by many individual owners for children and adults. Games are being organized. Horseshoe pits have been installed. A swing set was being used extensively. There were many new faces and neighbors to meet. The camaraderie was tangible. The atmosphere was festive and loud. The tables were loaded with pot luck side dishes. Bill and Larry were turning out delicious hamburgers, cheese burgers and brats. The kids were playing and happy. The donated gifts for the drawings were great and brought many smiles, oohs and awes. The pond was in excellent shape and more beautiful than ever. Numerous fishermen lined the banks under a beautiful sky. It was wonderfully organized. There are too many people to thank and name personally, but thanks Cindy, the board and all of the volunteers that made this such a successful picnic. Delbert bills, July 5, 2009.

Del Bills is a 28 year Wildwood resident; past Board President; retired electrical engineer; long time Boy Scout leader; a rural farming/ranching boyhood heritage; with an intense interest in nature. You can contact him at [www. delbertrbills@msn.com](http://www.delbertrbills@msn.com)

PICNIC FUN



Pres. Cindy Hertz



Cooks, Larry Covilla, Caroline Smith eyeing Brats, and Bill Hawthorne



Good Food



food Line



Sound Engineer, Del Bills



Enjoying the Good Food and Socializing



Enjoying good food and company



Board Members, Margo Moran, Cindy Hertz, Susan Borgardt



Fishing and a beautiful pond



Horse shoes and relaxation



Friends, Fun and smiles



Jim Borgardt and "Holey Smoley" game



Snake and "holey-Moley" games



Gifts for the lucky winners



And the lucky number is.....



Big Decision



Cuddly Care Bear for me



South parking lot and trailer pads