

Barbecue adds fun

TRAVERSE CITY — The biggest news on the campus of Northwestern Michigan College this spring is the expanded festival format of the annual Barbecue. A Traverse City tradition, this community picnic has been taking place on the third Sunday in May for 31 years — and this year has added a host of activities and amusements to increase attendance and enhance enjoyment.

With the food donated by the Gerald and Frances Oleson family and the proceeds donated for special college projects, the barbecue has welcomed thousands of friends and visitors to the campus. Every spring, a loyal corps of 500 volunteers comes forward to prepare the picnic lunch and provide the live entertainment for 10,000 guests. This May, on Sunday the 17th, the familiar buffalo burgers, cake walk and fish pond will be joined by a variety of other happenings.

Continuous live entertainment will be featured on the Cherry Festival stage out under the pine trees on the main campus. In a nearby parking lot, a street dance will begin about 4 p.m. Around the perimeter of the campus, the Northwestern Michigan Artists and Craftsmen will put on an arts and crafts show with many fine handmade items for sale. East of the health education building, an antiques market will offer collectibles for purchase.

To make the event more fun for children, the local Child Care Council has taken responsibility for organizing new activities, including a pretend first-aid booth, an old-fashioned costumes and

photo booth, an obstacle course and a clown. It is also hoped that amusement rides will be available for children.

Antique and custom cars will be displayed along the sidewalk leading up to the fine arts building, where concerts by NMC musical groups will be taking place. In the west hall cafeteria, bingo will be available for those who want to try their luck. Helping to move people around campus for all the activities will be orchard-tour-style buses.

The NMC Barbecue Board, which oversees this enormous community picnic, has voted this year to donate all proceeds to the NMC Art Museum Project, a \$2 million facility to display local, regional and national exhibitions. The importance of this project has given focus to the new festival format and added additional motivation to the volunteers.

"We're very excited about all this," says Ron Hofmeister, barbecue board president, "and we're working hard to get the word out. Many new people in the area don't even know about the barbecue, so we need to educate as well as promote." A tabloid supplement will be included in the Record-Eagle to help inform people about the event.

The NMC barbecue begins at 11 a.m. and will extend until 8 p.m. Tickets are \$3 in advance, \$4 at the gate, and are available at local banks, the Oleson Food Stores and the college library. Northwestern Michigan College is located on East Front Street, just east of downtown Traverse City. For more information call 922-1019.

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