

Stillwater residents celebrate Independence Day

By Moira K. Wiley
Staff Writer

Amidst the red, white and blue bursts of light were oohs and aahs from the crowd as Stillwater residents celebrated their independence at the Boomer Blast 4th of July celebration held at Boomer Lake on Thursday.

The 30-minute fireworks display over the lake was the culmination of a day full of events that attracted people as far away as Nevada and Arizona who were in town visiting relatives during the patriotic holiday. Activities included a fishing tournament, bicycle ride, live entertainment, games and more.

For fishing enthusiasts, a family fishing tournament was held at the Lake. Registration began at 6 a.m. at the south boat ramp and weigh-in was set for 11 a.m. with fishing related prizes awarded based on the total weight of the fish. There was a five fish limit for the weigh-in and all fishing had to be done from either the shore or docks with boats and tubes not allowed. There were four persons per team allowed and each participant had to provide their own fishing equipment and bait.

Those wanting to start the day with a vigorous workout joined the Red Dirt Pedalers for their 8th Annual Tour of Payne, which offered bicyclists various road options and distances to travel. Riders began their individual treks at 7:30 a.m. at the Best Western and traveled either 26, 36 or 62 miles on paved roads, 20 miles on dirt roads or 20 miles on dirt roads with a seven-mile trail loop. Each participant received a "A Real Payne in the Gear, Tour of Payne 2002" t-shirt and free showers and jacuzzi provided at the Best Western Pool area following the ride.

Local groups supplied live entertainment at the Lake during the evening beginning at 5:30 p.m. with "In the Zone." "Retrospect" followed their performance at 7 p.m. and the Community Band performed at 8 p.m.

Other activities throughout the day included a moonwalk, dunk tank and football throw sponsored by the youth football association. Food vendors were available for snacks throughout the event and attendees were happy to find the always pleasant port-a-potties located near the activity area.

Just after dark, the fireworks began under the assistance of the Noon Lions Club who help with the festivities each year. Although three-week-old Victoria Hoffman was not impressed with the loud display of brightly colored lights, other viewers of all ages took in the site with delight. At the end of the presentation attendees bestowed their applause of approval to those that made the display possible, which included this year's sponsors the City of Stillwater, Stillwater Noon Lion's Club, Stillwater Convention and Visitor's Bureau and Stillwater Parks, Events and Recreation.

Originally Published July 2002 by the *Stillwater NewsPress*