

Pageant plans coming along, help needed with finishing touches

Written by Betsy Blevins

Thursday, 21 April 2011 14:44 - Last Updated Thursday, 05 May 2011 14:46

April 14, 2011 - As previously announced, organizers of the 2011 Leonard Picnic are planning to bring back the Miss Leonard Pageant during the annual town celebration. This was a fun and popular event years ago, but has taken an 18-year hiatus and organizers are hoping to bring it back in a big way this year. While it bears the same name and will be held at the same time of year as the previous pageants, the structure and organization will be slightly different.

"The committee liked the idea of tying it into the picnic somehow and have it go along with the theme 'Honoring Our American Heroes'," said organizer Betsy Blevins. "So we thought the best way to do that would be to incorporate a costume category where the participants dress up as their idea of what an American hero is. It could be anything from a soldier to a police officer or firefighter, or even a mom or teacher. The options are endless and the category allows the girls to be creative. The older age groups will also provide an explanation for why they chose their hero, and that will factor into the judging as well."

In addition to the costume category, all age groups will have a Sunday Best category, which means frills and lace for the younger age groups and conservative semi-formal to formal wear for the older age groups, and all age groups, starting with the five year olds, will be required to have a talent.

"I know previously the talent was optional, but we really feel like we have a lot of talented girls in Leonard, even in the younger ages, and we want to showcase that," said Blevins. "And the talent competition is scheduled in place of the previous years' Friday entertainment, so we really want a quality, enjoyable time for those at the picnic grounds on Friday night."

The talent is also a category where creativity can come into play, and, in all categories, bonus points will be awarded to those contestants who relate to the theme 'Honoring Our American Heroes'.

While much planning has already taken place, there is planning left and some help is needed to put the finishing touches on the event.

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"I need some females - who are not moms with daughters entered in the pageant - that can help behind the scenes on the nights of the event. Runners in the halls at the school, stage hands possibly and assistants for moms that might need it," Blevins said. "We will have competitions on Monday and Tuesday nights, July 11 and 12, at the high school and then the talent will be at the City Park pavilion on Friday evening, July 15, and we'll need help on all three nights at both places."

For decorating, organizers hope to use uniforms of those commonly deemed a hero, and are looking for anybody that may have one to donate for that week. Suggestions are a soldier (would like to use more than one military branch), EMT, firefighter, police officer, etc. Mannequin-like items are also needed to showcase the uniforms on stage.

In keeping with tradition from years past, the first-place overall winners in each age category will have the option to ride in the picnic parade on Saturday morning, July 16, and organizers need to have available six cars that can be used to carry the winners. Convertibles, sports cars and trucks (or anything with a bed) are needed for that morning. Those placing second and third overall and even in the category competitions may participate in the parade, but will be responsible for providing their own transportation.

There are six age divisions for the pageant and they are as follows: Baby Miss - 0-2 years of age; Tiny Miss - 3-4 years of age; Little Miss - 5-7 years of age; Young Miss - 8-11 years of age; Junior Miss - 12-14 years of age; and Teen Miss - 15-18 years of age.

"We will award a first, second and third place winner in each age group in each competition - Sunday Best, Honoring Our American Heroes Costume and Talent (for those age groups where it's required)," Blevins explained. "The points from those competitions will be added up to determine the overall winners, which will be announced Friday night after the talent wraps up."

Entry forms and rules will be distributed this week in the elementary school folders that are sent home each day with the students. For older girls and children not yet school-aged, the forms will be available in the Leonard Intermediate, Leonard Junior High and Leonard High School offices and also at the business offices of KD Johnson, Inc. (on the northeast corner of the downtown square) and The Leonard Graphic (on Highway 69 next to Dairy Queen). The entry forms and \$20 registration fee should be returned to either KD Johnson or The Leonard Graphic by the Friday, June 17, deadline. A door drop is available at The Leonard Graphic for those needing to

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turn in forms after hours (payment **MUST** accompany the form).

Those wishing to volunteer, who have uniforms/decorations for use or a car that may be used for the parade should contact Betsy Blevins either at 972-658-7766 or by e-mailing betsy.blevins@skytex.net.