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## Liberty Day 2008 set for June 28 in Cedar Bluff

BY ROY MITCHELL

CEDAR BLUFF — With a determination akin to squirrels gathering for the winter, Cedar Bluff Parks and Recreation officials diligently ready their humble city in preparation for its most impressive event of the year. Liberty Day, a celebration concocted 16 years ago by former mayor Bob Davis, is celebrated the weekend before Independence Day. This year the Liberty Day will be held June 28. Delmus Brewster, Liberty Day organizer, says that this most prominent of all Cedar Bluff celebrations “started out as a Children's Day with a few little rides and hot dogs.” It has “kind of escalated,” he added.

The cozy little town of Cedar Bluff, with a population in the neighborhood of 1,500, nestles itself upon the shores of Weiss Lake and has only one traffic light. The sizable summer celebration expands Cedar Bluff's one-day population to an estimated 20,000.

The event is as much of a Cedar Bluff tradition as sugar is to a Southerner's tea. Yet a subtle breeze of change is hoping to render a breath of fresh air to this year's mid-summer merriment.

“We're getting as many things as we can without cost or with low cost,” said Applications Chairwoman Nell Oliver. “There will be lots of things you can do and see this year that won't cost a dime. We are also trying to expand to make things more educational.”

New this year is Mama's Turtles, a collection of 250-lb. tortoises children can pose with for pictures. The Southeastern Raptor Center, the same group that trains the eagle mascot to fly over Jordan-Hare Stadium before Auburn football games, will bring birds of prey to entertain the crowds.

Children will also be able to ride a horse and wagon down Spring Street, pal around with Aubie, the Auburn mascot, or examine the new antique tractor/engine show. Also, this year the opening ceremonies at 9:45 a.m. will honor the local fire department, rescue squad, police department, and volunteers.

A further celebration alteration involves Liberty Day's live entertainment. Last year, music at the lakeside stage didn't start until 6 p.m. This year the singing starts at 1:45 p.m. and will rock into the evening with groups such as the Midnight Run Band, Southern Nites, Buck & Duke, Kneckdown, and the featured act, Jonathan Alverson.

Naturally, anyone strolling across the Cedar Bluff Town Square will still encounter many favorite activities from past years. Arts and crafts vendors will still sit at every turn, and the puppet show will certainly be as popular as ever. Children can scale the rock-climbing wall, bound around in the NASA space simulator, stretch toward the skies with the Euro bungee jumping, and beg their parents to stay at the inflatable rides and games all day.

Cedar Bluff Liberty Day also sports a cornucopia of palate-pleasing goodies, including hamburgers, hot dogs, funnel cakes, homemade ice cream, bloomin' onions, pitas, peanuts, snow cones, and cotton candy are amongst the sticky, sugary pleasures to be consumed. As always, the fire department will be selling their delicious barbecue.

Perhaps the most prominent Liberty Day mainstays are the antique cars, motorcycles, and fireworks. Every Liberty Day, the Southern Rodders Car Club hosts one of the largest car, truck and motorcycle shows in the area. Around 350 antique autos will halt traffic up Highway 68. Those who plan on viewing the cars should remind their Grandma to fix her hair and make up because Big Boyz Toyz Production Co. will film Liberty Day cars for their TV show. Show promoters will also grant prizes and thousands of dollars in cash for owners of category-winning elite autos.

Also amongst the festivities, Weiss Lake Southern Cruisers Riding Club will sponsor a Liberty Day poker run and motorcycle show. All the proceeds from that event will be donated to the Children's Advocacy Center of Cherokee County.

And then there are the fireworks.

<http://www.cedarblufflibertyday.com/> calls the Liberty Day firework spectacular "one of the largest fireworks displays in Alabama." With the post-dusk fireworks exploding over the lake, traffic along Highway 9 comes to a standstill for miles around. Every year tourists and locals alike cannot help but gaze in awe upon hundreds of the red, green, and white boat lights, blanketing Lake Weiss's welcome waters in the moments before and after the sparkly show.

More detailed information on registering an antique car, inquiring about the poker run, or non-food related vending spaces can be found on the website.

Kind souls volunteering to help work Liberty Day, or anyone wishing to make tax-deductible donations to help defray the celebration's cost may contact Nell Oliver at her contact information on the website.