



Trees cleared
See page five



Garden Tour
See page seven

BALATON PRESS TRIBUNE

OUR 114TH YEAR • No. 27

WEDNESDAY, JULY 3, 2019

\$1.00

Pedaling for PTSD Awareness

By Jenny Kirk

Complete strangers recently rolled into Balaton on their bicycles, finding a welcoming community and leaving behind a significant message.

Mark and Judy Crawford had been bicycling along State Highway 14 west of Balaton when they were hit with stormy weather for the third time that day.

"Right when we were coming into town, there was a humongous set of lightning bolts," Mark Crawford said. "We had already gotten stormed on two times. We'd put on all the wet gear, then take it off again, dry out in a park and then put it back on again. We were hoping to make it 70-75 miles today, but I think we were only close to 55."



Mark and Judy Crawford

The husband and wife were on Day 26 of a cross-country journey to raise awareness of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in veteran and first responder communities.

"We're riding our bicycles from Lander, Wyoming, to Bar Harbor, Maine," Mark Crawford said. "It's been on Judy's bucket list for a number of years. We got delayed last year, so we're doing it in 2019."

The Crawfords left Lander on May 17. Four days later, they got snowed in for three days. They were making good time when the spring storm persuaded them to seek shelter in Balaton, a community of fewer than 650 people.

"We thought we'd stop in Tracy, but when the third storm rolled in, we thought, 'No, we have to find a way to make this work,'" Judy Crawford said.

Fortunately for the cycling duo, they made their way to the Balaton Community Center, where a local Red Cross Blood Drive was taking place.

"The people were so gracious," Crawford said. "As soon as we walked in, they were like, 'How can we help

Bicyclists:
See page seven



Floats make up a big part of the Fun Fest parade.

Fun Fest is here Weekend activities planned for all ages

The 2019 Fun Fest Celebration looks to be an action-packed weekend in Balaton.

Little Miss and Mr. Balaton for ages 5-7 kicks off the festivities at 6 p.m. Thursday at Victory Christian Church. On Friday, the Class of '69 is hosting a putting green competition at Balaton Bay Golf Course from 12-3 p.m., followed by the Balaton Area Community Foundation (BACF) burger feed beginning at 4:30 p.m. Lingen Dairy Soft Serve ice cream will also be available courtesy of Western Mutual Insurance Company of Minnesota's milestone of being in business for 125 years.

"The burger feed is our big fundraiser," BACF President Marcia Wee said. "That'll be on

Friday night, and it's always a \$5 meal. Most people can afford that. Lingen Dairy is also going to be there. Western Mutual is going to have ice cream there for people, so if you buy a meal, then you get free ice cream. They're doing that for their 125th anniversary."

Since being established about 12 years ago, the Foundation has granted more than \$84,000 back to the community. Last year, BACF awarded more than \$40,000 for projects throughout Balaton.

"We got a big endowment and that money always stays in there and grows," Wee said. "We get the interest off of it every year to spend.

Fun Fest:
See page eight

Community Happenings

Grade Schoolers

Attend a class at the Burchard Country School next to the museum on 2nd St. Wednesday, July 10th 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Come join the fun, experience a class in the old fashion way.

Putting Contest

Class of 1969 is sponsoring a Putting Contest on Friday July 5th from Noon to 3 p.m. All ages welcome. To be held at Balaton Bay Putting Green. For more information contact Brad Knudson at Knudson@cox.net or 480-284-1095. Proceeds to be reinvested back into Balaton.

Sunday Night at the Movies

A film will be shown Sunday, July 7th at Lakeview Senior Housing at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is invited. State Fair will be shown. For more information call Rose Wheeler-734-5433.

Fun Fest

Are you ready for a weekend of fun in Balaton? Come celebrate with us July 5th, 6th, and 7th. Variety Show starts at 6:30 on main street on Friday Night. In case of rain all activities will be moved into the Community Center on Friday evening.

Cemetery Walk

Saturday July 6th, 9 a.m. to noon at Lakeside Cemetery. Learn about past Balaton residents that left their mark on Balaton History. Transportation will be provided within the cemetery. See ad for additional information.

City Council Meeting

Monday July 8th at 7 p.m. at city hall.



Western Mutual 125th Anniversary

Western Mutual Insurance is Balaton's oldest continuous business. Founded in June 1894 — two years after the community was incorporated — Western Mutual is celebrating its 125th anniversary.

On Friday, employees (from left) Pam Kirk, Teresa Wendland, Cindy Thompson, Courtney Otto and Jennifer Kaup will be serving complimentary Lingen Dairy Soft Serve ice cream to anyone who purchases a burger meal that is sponsored by the Balaton Area Community Foundation. The event starts at 4:30 p.m. on July 5 in the downtown Balaton area. In case of rain, burgers and ice cream will be served at the community center.

Greatest humanitarian airlift recalled

By Jenny Kirk

It's been 70 years since local hero Chuck Childs flew his final mission as a C-54 pilot during the Berlin Airlift to help 2.5 million German citizens survive when the Russians created a blockade around West Berlin in June 1948, but the 99-year-old American patriot still remembers what it meant to be a part of the humanitarian effort.

"Nobody seems to know about the Berlin Airlift, but we saved 2.5 million people from West Berlin from freezing and starving to death," Childs said. "It was the greatest humanitarian airlift in history. We gave them back their freedom and they love us for it. And I am very, very proud that I flew those missions."

In an ironic twist, it had only been three years since Childs had finished his combat mission in the allied fight against the Nazis. The B-17 pilot completed his 37th combat mission in April 1945. Then during the Berlin Airlift in 1948 and 1949 — one of the first crises of the Cold War — Childs flew 196 round-trip missions from his base in Wiesbaden, Germany, to the airlift hub of Tempelhof Air Base.

"The things these guys did were absolutely incredible," Riley Kirk said.

At 21 years old, Kirk was the youngest of about 60 peo-

ple who gathered recently as Childs shared his experience in a presentation, which was sponsored by the Balaton Area Historical Society and held at KirPatrick's in Balaton.

"This was fantastic," Kirk said of the presentation. "He's a great speaker and it was very informational. I didn't know anything about the Berlin Airlift."

Pre-Berlin Airlift

Childs started the presentation by showing a photo of the "Big Three" — U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, Great Britain's Winston Churchill and Russia's Joseph Stalin — who has gathered in February 1945, to try and establish an agenda for governing post-war Germany.

"Roosevelt wasn't in too good of shape," Childs said. "At that conference, they were supposed to decide what is going to happen to Germany. Then Roosevelt died April 12, 1945, and poor (Harry S.) Truman took over. I don't think he had more than three meetings with Roosevelt. He had no idea about the atomic bomb."

After World War II ended in May 1945, millions of Germans were left without a government and without food, jobs or homes. Berlin, especially, was left in ruins.

"People were traveling around, trying to find a place



Chuck Childs shared his experience during the Berlin Airlift with residents in attendance at the Historical Society sponsored event held at KirPatrick's. Photo by Jenny Kirk

to settle," Childs said. "People were starving to death."

The presentation included a photo of two people scavenging meat from a dead horse just to survive.

"Stalin would shut off all the electricity until 2 o'clock in the morning," Childs said. "Then he'd turn it on for two hours. The women cooked anything they could find to cook. They'd make grass soup — anything — because they didn't have much to eat."

Childs added that the Russians looted tens of thousands

of famous artworks in addition to countless valuables inside bombed-out homes.

"The Russians had completely destroyed Berlin," he said. "Then they took everything out of Berlin — all the electric stuff and anything they could find — and sent it to Russia."

Even worse, Russian soldiers — Mongolian soldiers were the worst — reportedly raped women and children at an alarming rate.

"There was a lot of mass rape," Childs said. "And

many, many women were killed after they were raped. They say about a million women and young children from 12 on up were raped by the Mongolian soldiers. Some (women) did themselves in, too, because they knew what was going to happen to them. And anytime the men tried to help them, they'd be shot."

In July, Churchill, Stalin and Truman met and agreed to divide Germany up into zones of occupation.

"They divided Germany up into sectors," Childs said.

"Churchill said, 'What about France?' Stalin said, 'OK, but you take it out of your sector, not mine.' So, you had American, British and France on the west side (of Germany) and Stalin had a big area on the east side for his sector."

Childs said that Truman had good feelings about Stalin at first, but later realized that was not the case.

"Stalin wanted everybody out of Berlin," Childs said. "He wanted to do what (Adolph) Hitler was trying to do. He wanted to take over Europe. He wanted all of Europe to be communist. There were 2.5 million West Berliners, and he tried to coax them to come over to East Berlin."

Despite Stalin's promises of food and money, Childs said the West Berliners — except for roughly 20,000 of them — refused to cross over into communist East Berlin, which infuriated the Russian dictator.

Stalin then ordered roads, railways and waterways with access to Berlin from the west to be closed.

"He blockaded it so no food or supplies could get in," Childs said. "There had been some C-47s that had brought some food into Tempelhof, to the American soldiers, so they came up with an idea: we'll fly the food in. Stalin got a big chuckle out of that. He figured

Chuck Childs:
See page three