

A FOOD CRAWL THROUGH BMD

A four-day journey through all the food BMD has to offer



The Miners Dinner of steak, beans and cornbread



Ribs, fries, mac and cheese and cornbread



Smoked mac and cheese with bacon in a bread bowl



The Bohemia burger

Slabtown wins!

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It was close but Slabtown is taking home bragging rights for a year after beating out Lemati in the 58th Annual Bohemia Mining Days (BMD) Feud Contest.

Modeled after the storied feud of the city's origin, the feud contests have been a staple in BMD culture for decades. The story goes that Slabtown formed on the west side of the Coast Fork of the river and enjoyed fir planks as sidewalks which also served as the originator of its name. Lemati did not enjoy such luxuries and was a muddy mess of flooding where today's Main St. is located. That is, until, the railroad came to town.

Now the proud owners of the newest technology in transportation, Lemati now had access to travelers more readily than their rivals in Slabtown. The east side group, however, had the post office. That is, until it was hoisted up and stolen to cross the border and settle in Lemati.

Every year for BMD, the feud is taken up again with beard growing contests, cherry-pit spitting games, candlestick races and other old-time contests.

According to festival coordinator Cindy Weeldreyer, it has become difficult for the festival to keep track of how many times each team has won but this year's champion is Slabtown with 145 points to Lemati's 117.

To take home the victory, Slabtown scored wins in the Digging in the Dark contest, pie eating competition, the kids' cherry-pit spitting contest as well as the men's and the 20 mile by wheelbarrow test.

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I really like carrots. The other day I accidentally ate a pound. I also like salad. And apples. And blueberries. And cheese and crackers, too. These are essentially the staples of my diet. Yet for *some* reason, none of these foods are around at festivals.

This was very apparent as last weekend at the Bohemia Mining Days (BMD) when I, with the help of my editor, decided that I was going to try all of the food that this celebration has to offer. Festivals and food go hand in hand and so in this American tradition of excess amounts of fried food and meat, I was on a journey to try what BMD has to offer. Here is my journey:

I began this adventure of eating on Thursday night. The first meal came from the BMD board and featured steak and beans. This meal which is made to mirror what the miners ate after a long hard day on the job was less fitting for someone who

had been sitting at a computer all day. Regardless of a difference in occupation with the miners, I quickly devoured this meal, and its sides: a cornbread muffin, cookies and lemonade, with reckless abandon. It was a delight and I was ready for everything else that was to come.

Friday at the festival I scanned through the food items and settled on my favorite option: ribs.

This meal from H&H Barbeque was the meal of the weekend: a half rack of ribs, a cornbread muffin, fries and mac and cheese. This near perfection on a plate was overwhelming. My taste buds cheered with every bite of the ribs that were doused in BBQ sauce and the fresh cut fries. While the mac and cheese was a little too mushy, everything else on the plate compensated for this one downside. This meal that kept me full deep into the day was a true treasure.

Saturday was full of food and required assistance from some accomplices. With the help of

my friends Hunter and Eric, I was able to try my heart's content without having to eat everything. And they got fed. A win-win.

We started the day with the Chuckwagon breakfast of biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs and sausage links; a good meal that would be hard to mess up.

After watching the parade we were back to eating. There was the Bohemia Burger that had pulled pork on it that was just fine. Then there was smoked macaroni and cheese with bacon served in a bread bowl which was a strange show of excessive carbohydrates. There was also a deep-fried Twinkie with strawberries and whip cream which seemed like a soggy version of strawberries on a waffle. And then there was the 32nd Annual Chicken BBQ which was an overflowing plate of BBQ chicken, baked beans, coleslaw, a roll and a cookie which was just tasty and reminded me of the joy of a summer picnic.

Through teamwork and being three 22-year-old males who can generally just eat, we were able to make our way through this food. The journey of food ended Sunday with the Miners Breakfast at Bohemia Saddle Camp with a course of pancakes, ham and fried eggs.

Ultimately the food wavered from passable to delicious to good. It was exciting to be able to see the joy that the food was prepared with and how food really works to bring people together especially at a festival like this.

While my stomach has recovered from eating Ron Swanson levels of meat, I just hope that next year there is a booth full of nothing but carrots and apples.

BMD's annual 5K run

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As the sun began to set in Cottage Grove, the 53 runners and walkers of the Gold Rusk 5K hosted by the group Run CG Run came out to race last Friday night. The twilight race that started at 9 p.m. is in its 5th year of existence and has become another tradition of the Bohemia Mining Days celebration.

"This is my first night race and the weather was magnificent; couldn't ask for anything better," said Cottage Grove native Matt Davis who was attending his first Bohemia Mining Days in a decade. "The course was beautiful they put on a really good race... I couldn't have asked for a better run."

A man dressed as a miner, complete with a long flowing wig and beard in addition to a sweat band across his forehead, was on a bike that led the field of runners through the course that started on 6th and Washington street and made two loops of mile a mile and a half before finishing up where it started.

On the women's side of the race, Amelia Slama-Catron won in a time of 22:37. The men's side saw Jarrett Forrest being named winner with a time of 18:08 but Alex Dickinson running a time of 17:07. Dickinson, who did not start the race on time because he got lost during the warm up which led him to not cross first, had no qualms about not being named champion. As is generally the case with these races, the participants are there for the community and not as much for the competition.

"It's fun to see the race community here and with such good camaraderie and see familiar faces," said Jim Markus who has run the race each year since its inception. "It's always just a personal challenge for me as I'm getting older."

Markus was also quick to note that he holds the title as "the fastest Luther pastor in Cottage Grove, and the only one of course."

Jim Settlemeyer, who helped organize the event and was charge of race day operations, saw this race as a success.

"Feels wonderful, seemed liked people had a good time," said Settlemeyer. "[We're] trying to have our little connections four times a year."

Also notable at the race was National Football League Hall of Fame member and former Indianapolis Colts head coach Tony Dungy and his wife Lauren, who reside in Eugene, ran in the race with a pair of their friends.

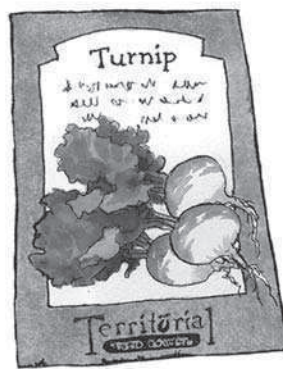
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