



101st Border Days offers a Grangeville scramble

Hard-boiled contestants take on the egg toss

Tribune/Kyle Mills

Lexie Adams of Grangeville dives for the falling egg thrown by her sister Delanie during the annual egg toss on the opening day of the 101st annual Border Days Monday in Grangeville. Lexie's effort came up short as the egg crashed down on the hot pavement.

By Kevin Gaboury of Lewiston Tribune

GRANGEVILLE - Downtown

Grangeville looked like the Angry Birds' worst nightmare after the Border Days egg toss Monday morning.

A one-block stretch of Main Street was littered with broken eggshells and yolks and as the pavement began to warm up in the mid-morning sun, a smell like that of omelettes drifted through the air.

The official kick-off to the 101st Border Days was filled with laughter, shouts and shrieks when an egg bounced off outstretched fingers and hit the street with a splat. And like the popular video game in which the namesake birds try to win back their eggs from greedy pigs, success depended on a steady hand and a bit of strategy.

"Communication is key," said Austin Wassmuth of Grangeville.

He should know. The 22-year-old and his brother, Neal, 25, estimate they've won the coveted golden egg trophy at least 10 times in the past. This year, they won with a high, arching toss over a string of flags stretched above Main Street.

"It gets better every time," Neal said. "We grew up in Grangeville and we've been doing it ever since we were young."

Neal now lives in Boise and Austin resides in Moscow, but they said they never miss a Border Days. The victory also earned them a \$40 cash prize, which Neal said he'll probably spend on gas.

The competition started innocently enough. Groups of two people lined up about six feet apart and tossed a raw egg back and forth a couple of times. Then, they were directed by announcer Mike Johnson to take a step back and make a one-handed catch. After that, they were told to take two more steps back and hike the egg to their partner like a football. The throws got progressively harder until they were chucking long bombs over the power lines. When the egg broke, both partners were out of the competition.

Johnson said the egg toss has been a Border Days staple for at least 70 of its 101 years, attracting hundreds of young and old participants to try their skill at handling the fragile breakfast staples.

For Dan and Danielle Kuchler of Gig Harbor, the football hike was their undoing.

"The football move got us," Dan said. "But at least we survived the behind-the-back throw."

Dan said he makes the 400-mile trip to Grangeville every year with his 15-year-old daughter to visit family members who own Seasons Restaurant on Main Street.

"We come here for the reuben," he said with a chuckle. "We do a little bit of everything while we're here. Grangeville puts on a nice little show."

Border Days continues today with street sports at 9 a.m. on Main Street, a parade at 2 p.m. and the Border Days Rodeo at 7 p.m.

Gaboury may be contacted at kgaboury@lmtribune.com or (208) 848-2275. Follow him on Twitter