

# Nation's Largest Cherry Ice Cream Social is a tasty opening day event

**BY MELANIE TACOMA**  
Record-Eagle staff writer

The only thing better than a bowl of Very Cherry Moose Tracks ice cream is over 200 gallons of Very Cherry Moose Tracks ice cream.

The opening day event for this year's National Cherry Festival will be The Nation's Largest Cherry Ice Cream Social in the Festival Open Space Park, presented by Country Fresh. Country Fresh will provide Festival-goers

with free Very Cherry Moose Tracks ice cream at noon, directly after the opening ceremony.

"The ice cream will be served by volunteers of the National Cherry Festival," explained Country Fresh representative and event manager Dan Parks. "There will be 12 tables, each with two or three volunteers who will be scooping ice cream all at once. Then the ice cream will be distributed by Girl and Boy Scout troops from

Traverse City."

Very Cherry Moose Tracks ice cream is made of cherry ice cream swirled with Mackinac Island fudge and chocolate, cherry-filled cups.

"Plain Moose Tracks has been around for a while," Parks explained, "We added cherries to the very popular Moose Tracks - it's sure to be a hit."

Parks is planning on serving ice cream to as many as 4,000 people, and advises that those who want to taste the

new cherry creation be in the Open Space for the ceremony.

"We serve what we have until its gone, and last year the ice cream was all served in 20 minutes," he said. "It went quick."

Last year Country Fresh provided 60 three-gallon cartons — called rounds — of ice cream, and Parks expects to use more than that this year.

"The turnout is incredible," he said, but added that he wasn't surprised by the number of people in the Open

Space. "You get the summertime, the Cherry Festival, the ice cream... It doesn't get better than that."

In addition to the ice cream at the opening ceremony, Country Fresh will be sponsoring three more ice cream socials, on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings. Ruthie the cow will be on hand by the Family Oasis, where Country Fresh soft-serve ice cream will be served with cherries jubilee all week.

## Cherry pie eating contest 'full' of fun

**BY SARAH HENRY**  
Record-Eagle staff writer

Streaks of red goo covering every available surface, people clutching their stomachs and groaning... Nope, it's not a new horror flick. It's just the annual Cherry Festival pie eating contest.

Adult Festival-goers will be able to act like kids again and play with their food during events such as the Sara Lee Pie Eating contests and Cherry Pit Spits.

Each year, the masses that flock to the National Cherry Festival partake in the tradition of stuffing their faces with 45 cases of cherry pie, each containing 48 individual slices, according to Nancy Grin, director of the pie contest.

Though the event involves inhalation of mass quantities of pie, Grin said people shouldn't take it too seriously. "We do not promote gluttony," she said. "This is just for fun."

The contests will take place July 6 at 4 p.m. and July 8 at 7 p.m. at the Open Space.

Grin said the contests are a lot of fun and everyone should participate.

"For adults, the best ones are the men with beards, because it (pie) gets all over," she said.

Grin said one man in particular was overzealous about pie eating and fulfilled his dream of kissing the "Cherry Pie Lady."

"There were so many cherries on his face that it even got up my nose," she said.

Grin said the contest rules include chewing thoroughly and swallowing, and keeping your arms behind your back.

First, second and third place ribbons will be awarded at each competition and everyone will receive a certificate of participation, Grin said.

Grin said safety is a key factor in the pie eating contest, so the fire department is always nearby in case of choking, and pie distributors always wear gloves.

Everyone from the National Cherry Queen to families to Australian pit-spit champions participate in Traverse City's annual Cherry Pit Spit contests, according to Herb Lemcool, chairman of the event and Cherry Festival trustee.

"It's hilarious," Lemcool said about the competition. "I think a good set of lips that are strong from kissing have a good chance."

Contests will be held July 5, 7, 9 and 11 from 6-7 p.m. at the Open Space.

Participants must sign up right before the contest, and will each be given two pits to spit as far as they can.

Lee Torrey, Cherry Festival trustee said the longest spit in Traverse City was about 48 feet, but occasionally other items besides cherry pits take flight.

"We have the proverbial denture flying sometimes," Torrey

said.

Winners of each contest will receive Festival logo-wear and souvenirs, and go on to compete in a final Pit Spit-Off will take place July 12 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Open Space.

The grand prize is a free night for two at the Garland Resort.

This event is presented by WKHQ 106 FM.

### Cherry Memories

*"About 12 or 14 years ago, the Festival brought in the Australian National Cherry Spit Champion. They had a thing going where the public could spit against him, and the organizers thought no one would beat this guy and had built the whole night around him winning. Well, I beat him and everyone else, but I was disqualified for not registering properly. But the Aussie champion knew that I had beat him, so after the event was over, he took me over to the beer tent and bought me beers. We had a great time."*

**Rick Coates,  
Stage Right Media**

## YOU'RE ON VACATION!

### Why Eat at the Same Old Places?

### See What Traverse City Has to Offer!



- Lunch & Dinner
- Everything from Scratch
- Children's Menu
- Happy Hour in Our Lounge
- Live Entertainment every Thursday-Saturday

**Early Bird Specials**  
**10% off**  
**Regular Menu Entrees**  
**Mon.-Fri. 4-6 p.m.**

Dining and Dancing every Thurs.-Sat.  
Regularly featuring Dominic Fortuna



1407 S. Division • U.S. 31 S.  
South of 14th Street • Traverse City