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Young TV Star, Katie Horyna, To Lead Pancake Day Parade

She's a race winner, a TV star, and now the youngest Pancake Day parade grand marshal ever. Katie Horyna, 10, will lead this year's Pancake Day parade, and though she doesn't yet know how to drive the car she'll be riding in, one thing Katie does know is pancakes.

This past October, Katie appeared on Nickelodeon's show, "Figure it Out," a show that features kids with interesting talents and a celebrity panel who tries to guess that talent by asking "yes" or "no" questions. Katie's talent was Pancake Day racing—she won the nine-year-old girls' race last Pancake Day.

Katie and her family traveled to Hollywood in September for the taping of the show, and Katie won several prizes during the show. Each contestant has a secret phrase that the celebrity panel must guess, and as the contestant makes it through each round, he or she wins a prize.

"The celebrities almost guessed my phrase of 'Won English Race with Pancake in Skillet,'" Katie said. "They guessed every word but skillet. I won a scooter with helmet, camping equipment, and a trip to a horse ranch in New York."

Katie found out that taping a TV show wasn't all fun and games, though.

"TV takes a long time to make a short show," she said. "They are very strict about kids going to school during the week. We had to go to school for four hours."

Katie enjoyed meeting the other contestants.

"I learned that there are lots of little towns that celebrate unusual holidays, just like Liberal," she said.

What was her favorite part of the show?

"The best part that I will remember is getting slimed," she said. "It was very cold."

The parade is the closing event for Tuesday's Pancake Day events, and this is the first time the Pancake Day Board has selected a child for the honor.

Katie was chosen partially because of her appearance on the TV show, but also because as a kids' race winner, Katie is part of a much-beloved local tradition. The International Race may be the main event, but many who grow up in Liberal run in the kids' races each year and count those times as fond memories.

Katie will be running in the 10-year-old girls' race Tuesday morning. Though she won last year, she is not certain of a repeat victory.

"Every year it is a close race," she said. "I have a lot of friends who are very fast."

And even though she is now a TV star, Katie hasn't let that go to her head. She said she is a bit nervous about leading the parade.

The annual parade, slated this year for 3 p.m. Feb. 12, serves as the culmination of the four-day celebration of Pancake Day events. This year's theme is "Peace Through Service."

Entries are still being accepted for the parade. There is no entry fee, and any group or individual is invited to enter a float in one of the following divisions: commercial, non-profit, schools, antique automobiles, and antique equipment. Cash prizes of $150 for first place, $100 for second place and $50 for third place will be awarded in each division. Entrants do not have to live in Liberal.

For more information, contact Larry Wells, parade chairman, at lom1@sbcglobal.net <mailto:lom1@sbcglobal.net> . Entry forms are also available on the Pancake Day website at www.pancakeday.net.

Pancake Day Press Release