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Crabfest comes to Colorado Springs

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October 14, 2008 - 5:38PM

TERESA FARNEY THE GAZETTE

You can take Richard Carson out of the East Coast, but you can't take the crab fest out of his heart.

Carson, who was transferred here from the East Coast 15 years ago when he worked for MCI, clings to his tradition of having an annual crab fest each fall. The Baltimore crab-picking tradition all starts with dozens of blue crabs being steamed, along with corn on the cob and new red potatoes. When everything is cooked it is dumped in the middle of the table, and everyone dives in. Rolls of paper towels come in handy as you pick through crab after crab.

"There were a bunch of us at MCI sitting around talking about how we missed our crab fest," Carson said. "We decided to order some crabs so we could have a big dinner."

That first year, about 10 couples got together to celebrate their New England traditions.

Bruce and Carolyn Boyce were among the MCI employees transferred here in 1993 and were part of the original crab-festgoers.

"The best part of the party each year is the crabs, of course," Bruce Boyce said.

And getting together with friends. "It's mostly the socialization that everyone enjoys," Carson said. "Get a bunch of friends together, have some beers and take your time picking the crabs. I call someone a junior picker if they only do a couple or three crabs. A senior picker will take hours to go through a bunch of crabs, getting every speck of meat."

This year's crab fest was held at his home Sept. 6 with about 75 guests. Carson ordered two bushels of blue crabs (about 6 1/2 dozen crabs in each bushel) from The Crab Place in Maryland, his favorite mail-order source.

"I've tried several other places, but I always get good, meaty crabs from this company," he said. "Every year, the crabs run a little different as far as how meaty they might be."

We did a test run earlier, and I was disappointed in the crabs, and we were thinking this might be the first year we would not do a crab fest. But we did another practice run, and they (the crabs) were much better."

Carson has learned it's best to order the crabs already steamed.

"There is less waste this way," he said. "They season and steam them and ship them for delivery the next day."

When it's party time, he fires up a turkey-frying rig with a big 5-gallon pot - but instead of filling it with oil for frying, he gently reheats the cooked crabs.

"I use a mixture of beer and water to reheat the crabs," he said. "The Crab Place sends along more of their seasoning that I add as the hot crabs are served."

When the first batch is served up, his wife, Kim, dumps pans of steamed corn and new potatoes on tables covered with butcher paper. And the fest ensues. Because it takes a long time to really get enough crab meat to feel full, Richard also smokes some ribs and grills hot dogs and hamburgers. Guest bring side dishes.

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(THE GAZETTE/KIRK SPEER) Richard and Kim Carson host a yearly Maryland Blue Crab Fest for friends and neighbors. This year's gathering on Sept. 6 drew about 75 guests.

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billthecat wrote:

Just a crabby reminder... January is Dungeness Crab time in Colorado Springs. Most grocery stores put them on sale in January. Albertson's has been the first to do so each year for the past several years. Safeway used to be first but they started being later. I prefer the Dungeness over Blues anyday. They come frozen so we always keep a few in the freezer so we can enjoy them all year long.

These crabs are cooked but, they haven't been cleaned! They are easy to clean. Just pop the back off and clean out everything that isn't white. Use a spray of water if you can. Use cold water. Be sure to get the gills out too. What's left is pure clean crab.

Use the cold crab meat in crab salads or pop them into a 9 x 13 baking pan in the oven at 375 for about 15 minutes to warm them up. A little lemon and garlic in melted butter with home made bisquits and you're ready to go! There's a lot of crab meat in the body so save it for salads too!

10/17/2008 9:04:17 PM

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rckymntim wrote:

Jayman, I saw an article earlier saying the Citgo sign in Kenmore square burned this morning. It looked like a small fire with only a few burned lights. It does not bode well for the Sox.

10/15/2008 10:40:29 AM

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jayman wrote:

NS patriot1. Calmbake on the beach. Corn on the cob, steamers, lobsters, cold beer. Oh Man. And the SOX are choking. Just like old times.

10/15/2008 10:09:28 AM

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patriot1 wrote:

Talk about the WORST article ever! Now I'm homesick AND hungry!

10/15/2008 9:40:34 AM

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citizen1 wrote:

Crabs being sent-out "mail-order" from Maryland...that had to be REAL expensive. But, WHAT FUN!!! It adds some "diversity" to the landscape and mountain-scape of this area!!! Great "date" (September 6th) to have a crab-fest, too!!!

10/15/2008 9:20:02 AM

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agnostigirl2 wrote:

Jeesh...how much does that cost?

10/15/2008 8:39:34 AM

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