

FOOTBALL RIVALRY

Bell Game fever breaks out

Centennial cheerleaders uplift residents at Sharmar Village tailgate party

BY JON POMPIA
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Bell Game fever is running rampant in the city, with not even Sharmar Village Care Center immune.

On Wednesday, residents were treated to an annual tailgate party highlighted by some rousing routines from the animated Centennial Bulldog cheerleading squad.

Hoping to spread some Bell Game cheer to the gallery — which included graduates of both Centennial and Central, as well as a former cheerleader and football queen from Pueblo Catholic High — the crimson-clothed sideline supporters offered an inspiring prelude to Friday’s historic contest.

Which, of course, the residents will gather ’round the television to watch.

“For the last six years we’ve done a tailgate party with Central and Centennial,” said Stephanie Flores, Sharmar’s activities director. “We celebrate with pizza, sodas and cheers, and the residents — especially alumni of the schools — really enjoy the event.”

And for Centennial grads like Dorothy Lane, the Bulldog cheerleaders were a refreshing blast from the past.

“Yes, I went to Centennial,” said Dorothy Lane. “But don’t ask me when I graduated because I don’t remember! But the cheerleaders are wonderful. I was a cheerleader at Centennial, but I don’t think I could do it now.

“But it sure did brighten my day.”

“I’m a Centennial Bulldog all the way,” added Barbara Tihanovich, a 1950 grad. “I hope the girls being here will bring the team some luck.

“And I know some of the



CHIEFTAIN PHOTOS/CHRIS MCLEAN

Sharmar resident and Centennial graduate Dorothy Lane poses with Bulldogs cheerleaders (from left) Brittany Griego, Olivia Sales and Katie Babich on Wednesday in advance of the Bell Game.

Watch the video 
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STEPHANIE FLORES
SHARMAR’S ACTIVITIES
DIRECTOR



Sharmar resident Mabel Martin spends a few minutes with her great-granddaughter Tahni Moore during a visit by Centennial cheerleaders on Wednesday in commemoration of Friday’s game.

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ladies here are from Central. But we all get along. No grudges here.”

Even those who wore Central blue during their high school days were charmed by their Centennial guests.

“I’m pulling for Central but I sure appreciate these cheerleaders,” said Carol Weldon, who didn’t want to go out on a limb and predict a Bell Game victor.

“I just hope we all get together and have fun and nobody gets hurt.”

Another resident with even stronger Central ties is Mildred Lesar, whose brother-in-law Ed Lesar led Wildcats to state football titles in the 1960s.

“My son Kenny played when he was coach,” Lesar said. “And we had tickets for every Bell Game, so we went and screamed like heck.”

With a portrait of herself as a raven-haired Pueblo Catholic High football queen nearby,

Velma Winch seemed pleased with the recollections brought back by the red-hued rah-rah.

“At that time she dated a Central football player, who later became my dad,” said Mary Kelder. “I think this brought back some good memories for her, especially when she saw her football queen picture. It kinda sparked her eyes.”

Olivia Sales, a fourth-year Centennial cheerleader, said the group’s appearance was designed to inspire excitement in one of the city’s most well-known traditions.

“I think the residents like it,” Olivia said. “Hopefully, it will remind them of their high school days. It’s a lot of fun to talk to them.”

“And yes, there are some residents who are Central grads. But no, they don’t give us dirty looks,” Olivia added with a laugh.

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