

## “What Rain Day Means to Me”

The John O’Hara Award Essay  
Contestant #4 – Bryn Patton

When I think of Rain Day, I think of Tradition. I think of how all the traffic is detoured on the back streets to get through the small town of Waynesburg, because High Street is closed for the annual Rain Day Celebration. All of Greene County comes together for a day of fun that is filled with entertainment, children’s activities, crafts made by local residents, a lot of great hometown food along with the umbrella decorating contest and the Baby Rain Day Competition. This is also the day that the new Miss Rain Day makes her debut appearance and we all hope for rain. Most people want a bright sunny day for their street celebrations, here in Waynesburg, PA we PRAY FOR RAIN!! It has actually rained on July 29<sup>th</sup> for 114 out of the past 142 years – WOW that is only 28 years that it is not rained, out of the past 142, that is pretty amazing!

Oh how I look forward to being one of the contestants that will be performing on the Court House Steps, I have participated in this tradition for the past four years and have been very proud to be part of this unique street festival that only Waynesburg has. Our local radio station, WANB, is always there with Doug Wilson leading the schedule of events.

To think Rain Day actually began because a local farmer, whose birthday was on July 29<sup>th</sup>, noticed that it always seem to rain on his birthday. He mentioned this to, Bill Allison, a Clerk working at a local Drug Store, Mr. Allison began recording the weather on July 29<sup>th</sup> in a ledger, this information has been passed down through generations until eventually it was handed over to the Waynesburg Special Events Commission.

Another tradition that goes with Rain Day is the annual hat wager, made with notable celebrities that it will rain on July 29<sup>th</sup>. Early celebrities have included Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Johnny Carson. Recent wagers have been with various Pittsburgh Athletes including Mario Lemieux (Penguins), Kent Tekulve (Pirates) and Troy Polamalu (Steelers), actress Patricia Heaton and even Miss America Katie Stam!

The Miss Rain Day Pageant is an event that so many residents have looked forward to since the early 1950’s. The Pageant actually started as a “bathing beauty” contest on the Court House Steps. Over the years it has evolved into a pageant with four areas of competition (interview, sportswear, talent and evening gown). This pageant provides so many opportunities for the young women of our county; they meet new people, make friends, develop interview skills, gain experience in making public appearances and public speaking. Contestants also learn the importance of good sportsmanship, being a positive role model and being a good example for our youth to look up to.