

Mid-week Market

By Michelle Weisblat-Dane

I drove up to Soda Springs Park Wednesday evening for the Mid-week Market. As I opened my car door, wonderful smells wafted towards me. I had expected to come and buy some fresh fruits and vegetables for the up-coming week. I hadn't expected the wonderful treats and atmosphere that I encountered. A friend also came along with me, and she, too, was pleasantly surprised. "This is unlike any other farmers' market I've ever been to," Bonnie Starsky commented.

It was as if they had taken the spirit, the shops, the people, the arts - the essence of Manitou - and condensed it down to this one evening in Soda Springs Park. I saw friends, neighbors, teachers, council members and even the mayor. "This has turned into a real community event," commented Councilperson Marc Snyder.

Many of the local restaurants such as *Charlie's Pit BBQ* and the *Mona Lisa Fondue* were there, offering their food for tokens we could purchase. We ate apple-cinnamon crepes and candy for dessert. We strolled down the rows of booths, eating, listening to the band playing, and finding items to put together for this week's dinner menu.

There were other merchants from Manitou Springs there as well, selling everything from toys, houses, and clothes to candles. The Manitou Springs Garden Club gave advice and sold plants. There were several local farms there with freshly picked vegetables. We found the *Colorado Bread Company* there as well, with a wonderful

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variety of fresh breads available, so we got some. There was rice and fish for sale to complete the dinner menu. Even after eating, it was hard to not get hungry again from all the extraordinary smells and sights.

It was the consummate sale for all. Children played at the park while parents shopped. The sun slowly set behind Red Mountain. It was reminiscent of a gentler time when people would meet at the market, catch up on the news, meet new people, and buy what they needed for the week, all the while having fun in a relaxed, friendly, atmosphere. I invite everyone to come and join me next week, and every Wednesday until September 21st, from 4pm – 8pm at Manitou's Soda Springs Park.