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'Let's All Go to the Fair,' Southwest Washington Fair Returns

By Isabel Vander Stoep

isabel@chronline.com

As someone at the fair walks from the Rotary Corn Booth to the horse barn, do they travel from Chehalis to Centralia? Are they in one city all along?

The Southwest Washington Fairgrounds blur the line between the Twin Cities. And the desire to claim them for one or the other stems from community pride in the location.

This year, it has been host to vaccination clinics, Country Chicks markets, gun shows and master gardener plant sales.

And on Aug. 17, the Southwest Washington Fair will return.

"I think (the fair) is the biggest celebration we have in Lewis County," said Fair Commissioner Edna Fund.

Out-of-county exhibitors and visitors bring a boost to commerce, agricultural education is celebrated, scones are enjoyed: these features are among many that make the event so important. But what was missed most from a year without the fair, administrators believed, was the connection of community members. Despite varying ages, interests, backgrounds or favorite exhibits, all are welcome at the Southwest Washington Fair.

The theme for this year's fair is simply "Let's All Go to the Fair."

"We want everybody to go," said Events Coordinator Pat Slusher Jr. "It was just the most inclusive thing we could think of."

Fair attendees this August will experience what Slusher called "modernized" and "rebuilt fairgrounds."

The opportunity to work on the grounds for prolonged periods of time only comes around so often, he said, noting the county had done significant work on the fairground infrastructure over the course of the pandemic.



File Photo

Attendees walk through the 2018 Southwest Washington Fair.

The bathrooms are the most notable upgrade, which Fund and Slusher both mentioned in separate interviews with The Chronicle, united in their pride in the work.

"One thing that really hits home for me that we've done is we've really upgraded the accessibility for people with disabilities in our restrooms," said Fund, who was among the volunteers assisting in doling out COVID-19 vaccines to thousands at the fairgrounds this year.

Both sets of bathrooms now include a shower room and fountain sinks that can be turned on with a hands-free button among other sanitation-promoting features.

Another new addition to this year's fair will be a third KACS free Sunday concert. Previous years have only had two.

Performers who might have been at the canceled Clark or Thurston county fairs have been easier to book, Fund speculated. Similarly, youth involved in 4-H and FFA (Future Farmers of America) from those areas may be heading to Lewis County in order to show.

"It just feels good to be somewhat back to normal," Fund said. "It's going to be a great fair for people to come and enjoy and just rejoice that we can be together again."

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FAIR SCHEDULE



Every Day:

Admission — Adults: \$10, Children ages 6 to 12 or seniors ages 65 and over: \$6,
Children ages 5 and under: free

Gates open at 10 a.m., Carnival opens at noon

Grandstand and Expo Hall buildings close at 9 p.m.

11 a.m., 12, 1 and 2 p.m. — Centralia City Light High Voltage Demonstration Trailer
Near Red Gate, North End

11:30 a.m. — Prize Scramble In The Hay Near Circus Tent, North End

12, 2 and 4 p.m. — Parrot Ambassadors at The Midway Stage

1,3 and 5 p.m. — Vuelta La Luna Variety Circus Under The Big Top, North End

5 p.m. — Daily Kid Contests (Kid With The Reddest Hair, Most Freckles,
Best Smile, Looks The Most Like Mom Or Dad), Midway Stage

Showtimes Posted At Stage — Hypnosis Shows, Steampunk Stage Near Carnival

Showtimes Posted At Exhibit, Open Viewing All Day

— Live Shark Encounter, Field Behind Fair



File Photo

Alfred Kimmet eyes the two lollipops he found in a pile of hay at the Kids Corner of the Southwest Washington Fair.

Continued on **PAGE 5**

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Continued from **PAGE 4**

Tuesday, Aug. 17:

Kids Day: Ages 6 to 12 get half-price admission

Gates close at 10 p.m.

Livestock Shows: (All Day)

4-H and FFA, Dept. J — Dairy Cattle • 4-H and FFA, Dept. K — Sheep

4-H, FFA and Open Class, Dept. N — Poultry

All Day Judging, Horse Arena

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. — Machine Embroidery Demos, Home Arts Building

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. — Knitting Demos, Home Arts Building

11 a.m. — Opening Ceremonies, Community Stage

11 a.m. to 4 p.m. — Northwest Christian Bands Showcase: Aaron Foster Band, Keith Bachman, Set Free NW Band, Saloon Stage

12 to 2 p.m. — Stitchery Demos, Home Arts Building

1 p.m. — Photo Composition Demonstration, Photo Barn

— “Fuchsia Bloom Boosting — How to Increase Your Fuchsia Blooms,” Floral/Ag Building

— “Repair What You Wear” Demo —

Master Recycler Composters, North End

1 to 7 p.m. — “Make and Take” Demos, Home Arts Building

2 to 6 p.m. — Weaving Demos, Home Arts Building

2 p.m. — Old School Gun School safety presentation, Stage South

3 p.m. — “How to Increase Your Fuchsia Blooms,” Floral/Ag Building

— Krista Hanson, singer, Community Stage

5 p.m. — 10 p.m. - Machine Quilting and Piecing Demos, Home Arts Building

— Heritage Kung Fu Demonstration, Community Stage

6 p.m. — Old School Gun School safety lecture, Community Stage

— Little Miss Friendly Ceremony, Saloon Stage

7 p.m. — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage

7:30 p.m. — Johnny Roquemore singer, Saloon Stage

8 p.m. — Kynan Shane singer, Community Stage

— Street Dance, Chris Guenther & the Honky Tonk Drifters, Midway Stage

9 p.m. — Johnny Roquemore, singer, Saloon Stage

Wednesday, Aug. 18

Senior Day: Ages 60 and over get half-price admission

Gates close at 10 p.m.

Livestock Shows: (All Day)

4-H and FFA, Dept. J — Dairy Cattle • 4-H and FFA, Dept. K — Sheep

4-H, FFA and Open Class, Dept. N — Poultry

All Day Judging, Horse Arena

10 to 11:30 a.m. — Hand Quilting, Home Arts Building

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. — Christmas Stitchery, Home Arts Building

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. — Machine Embroidery, Home Arts Building

10 a.m. — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage

11 a.m. — Heritage Kung Fu Demonstration, Community Stage

12 p.m. — Senior Day Contests, Community Stage

12:30 p.m. — Old School Gun School safety lecture, Community Stage

Continued on **PAGE 6**



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File Photo

Rodeo clowns attempt to distract a bucking bull during the rodeo at the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds.

Continued from **PAGE 5**

- 1 p.m.** — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage
— Photo Editing Demonstration, Photo Barn
— Repair What You Wear Demo, Master Recycler Composters, North End
— “Learn What a Hardy Fuchsia Is and How to Grow Them,” Floral/Ag
- 1 to 3 p.m.** — Soap Making, Home Arts Building
- 1 to 7 p.m.** — Make and Take Demo, Home Arts Building
- 2 to 6 p.m.** — Weaving Demos, Home Arts Bldg
- 3 p.m.** — “Learn What a Hardy Fuchsia Is and How to Grow Them,” Floral/Ag
— Old School Gun School safety lecture, Community Stage
- 4:30 p.m.** — Concert: Danny Vernon, Illusion Of Elvis, Saloon Stage
- 5 to 10 p.m.** — Machine Quilting and Pricing Demos, Home Arts Building
- 7 p.m.** — Sounds of Swing Orchestra, Community Stage
- 7:30 p.m.** — Concert: Danny Vernon, Illusion Of Elvis, Saloon Stage
- 8 p.m.** — Nick and the Underdawgs, Midway Stage

Thursday Aug. 19

Teen Night: Students with valid ASB or high school ID card get \$3 admission from 4 p.m. to close • Gates close at 10 p.m.

Livestock Shows: (All Day)

- 4-H and FFA, Dept. J — Dairy Cattle • 4-H and FFA, Dept. K — Sheep
- 4-H, FFA and Open Class, Dept. N — Poultry

All Day Judging, Horse Arena

- 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** — Machine and Embroidery Demos, Home Arts Building
- 10 a.m. — 6 p.m.** — Christmas Stitchery and Pillow Case Demos, Home Arts Building
- 11 a.m.** — WA Old Time Fiddlers, Community Stage
- 12 p.m.** — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Saloon Stage
— KELA/KMNT Diaper Derby, Saloon Stage
- 1 p.m.** — Repair What You Wear Demo — Master Recycler Composters, Kids Corner
— Photo Lighting Demonstration, Photo Barn
— Putting Fuchsias to Bed — “How to Winterize Your Fuchsia,” Floral/Ag Building
- 1 to 7 p.m.** — Make and Take Demos, Home Arts Building
- 1:30 p.m.** — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage
— Johnny Roquemore singer, Saloon Stage
- 2 to 6 p.m.** — Grocery Bag Demos, Home Arts Building
— Weaving Demos, Home Arts Building
- 2:30 p.m.** — Old School Gun School safety presentation, Community Stage
- 3 p.m.** — Johnny Roquemore singer, Saloon Stage
— Putting Fuchsias to Bed — “How to Winterize Your Fuchsias,” Floral/Ag Building
— Heritage Kung Fu Demo, Community Stage
- 4 p.m.** — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage
- 4:30 p.m.** — Pie Eating Contest — Kids, Teens, Adults, Midway Stage
- 5 p.m.** — Old School Gun School safety presentation, Community Stage
- 5 to 10 p.m.** — Machine Quilting and Piecing, Home Arts Building

Continued on **PAGE 7**



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Continued from **PAGE 6**

7 p.m. — 4-H Consumer Revue, Community Stage

7 p.m. — Concert: Ron Artis II And The Truth, Saloon Stage

8 p.m. — The Rowes band, Midway Stage

8:30 p.m. — Cowlitz River Band, Community Stage

Friday Aug. 20

Military Appreciation Day: Discount with Military ID

Gates close at 11 p.m.

Livestock Shows: (All Day)

4-H and FFA, Dept. J — Beef Cattle • 4-H and FFA, Dept. K — Goat

4-H, FFA and Open Class, Dept. N — Poultry

All Day Judging, Horse Arena

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. — Machine Embroidery, Home Arts Building

10 to 11:30 a.m. — Crazy Quilting Demos, Home Arts Building

10 a.m. to 1 p.m. — Youth “Plant a Shoe, Take Home a Free Plant in a Shoe”, Floral/Ag

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. — CTA Sewing Demos - Home Arts Building

10 a.m. — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage

11 a.m. — Old School Gun School safety presentation, Community Stage

12 p.m. — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage

1 p.m. — Krista Hanson, singer, Saloon Stage

— Heritage Kung Fu demonstration, Community Stage

— Repair What You Wear Demo, Master Recycler Composters,
North End

— Camera Settings Demonstration, Photo Barn

— “How to Increase Your Fuchsia Blooms”, Floral/Ag Building

1 to 7 p.m. — Make and Take Demos, Home Arts Building

2 to 6 p.m. — Weaving Demos, Home Arts Building

2 p.m. — Winlock Dance Center, Community Stage

3 p.m. — “How to Increase Your Fuchsia Blooms,” Floral/Ag Building

— Krista Hanson, singer, Saloon Stage

4:30 p.m. — Watermelon Eating Contest for Kids, Teens, Adults, Midway Stage

5 p.m. — Salzer Creek Band, Community Stage

5 to 11 p.m. — Machine Quilting and Piecing demos, Home Arts Building

5:30 p.m. — Junior Livestock Market Sale Opening Ceremonies,
New Judging Pavilion

6 p.m. — Junior Livestock Market Sale Auction, New Judging Pavilion

— Two Town Tuners, barbershop singers, Community Stage

8 p.m. — Sucker Punched 80's “hair band” tribute, Midway Stage

— Concert: The Kingsmen, Saloon Stage

9 p.m. — Ministerio Iglesia De Dios, Community Stage

Saturday, Aug. 21

Royalty Day • Gates close at 10 p.m.

Livestock Shows: (All Day)

4-H and FFA, Dept. J — Beef Cattle • 4-H and FFA, Dept. K — Goat

4-H, FFA and Open Class, Dept. N — Poultry

All Day Judging, Horse Arena

Continued on **PAGE 8**

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Continued from **PAGE 7**

- 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** — Machine Embroidery Demos, Home Arts Building
- 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** — Lewis Co. Beekeepers Association Honey Tasting, Floral/Ag Building
- 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.** — CTA Sewing Demos, Home Arts Building
- 10:30 a.m.** — One Little Tree, Community Stage
- 12 to 2 p.m.** — Taking Measurements for Proper Fit , Home Arts Building
- 12:30 p.m.** — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage
- 1 p.m.** — Repair What You Wear Demo, Master Recycler Composters, North End
- Landscape Photography Demos, Photo Barn
- Hardy Fuchsias — “Learn What a Hardy Fuchsia Is/How to Grow Them”, Floral/Ag
- 1 to 7 p.m.** — Make and Take Demos, Home Arts Building
- 1 to 3 p.m.** — Soap Making Demos, Home Arts Building
- 1:30 p.m.** — Saturday Afternoon Jazz at the Fair with Funk Junkies, Community Stage
- 2 to 6 p.m.** — Weaving Demos, Home Arts Building
- 3 p.m.** — “Hardy Fuchsias: Learn What a Hardy Fuchsia Is/How to Grow Them,” Floral/Ag
- 4 p.m.** — Centralia Ballet Academy, Community Stage
- 3:30 p.m.** — BLUES POWER REVUE - Blues Brothers Tribute Band, Saloon Stage
- 5 to 11 p.m.** — Machine Quilting and Piecing Demos, Home Arts Building
- 6 p.m.** — RODEO and WILD HORSE RACE, Grandstand
- 7:30 p.m.** — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage



File Photo

Girls ride down the tallest slide at the Southwest Washington Fair.

- 8 p.m.** — Edgewater Trio, Midway Stage
- HELL’S BELLES- Famous All-Female AC/DC Tribute Band, Saloon Stage
- 9 p.m.** — Brian Green Band, Community Stage

Sunday, Aug. 22

Family Day: All ages get half-price admission

Gates close at 7 p.m.

Livestock Shows: (All Day)

- 4-H and FFA, Dept. J — Beef Cattle • 4-H and FFA, Dept. K — Goat
- 4-H, FFA and Open Class, Dept. N — Poultry

All Day Judging, Horse Arena

- 9 a.m.** — Gethsemane, band, Community Stage
- 10 a.m.** — Lewis Co. Beekeepers Honey Tasting, Floral/Ag Building
- 10 to 11:30 a.m.** — Hand Quilting, Home Arts Building
- 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** — Knitting and Sewing Bags, Home Arts Building
- 11 a.m.** — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage
- 12 p.m.** — “Stars of Tomorrow” Talent Show, Community Stage
- DEMOLITION DERBY, Grandstand
- 12 to 2 p.m.** — “What Colors Do for You” Demos, Home Arts Building
- 1 p.m.** — “Repair What You Wear” Demo, Master Recycler Composters, North End
- “How to Winterize Your Fuchsia”, Floral/Ag Building
- 1 to 6 p.m.** — Make and Take Demos, Home Arts Building
- 1:30 p.m.** — INFUSED Dance and Motion, Community Stage
- 2 to 6 p.m.** — Weaving Demos, Home Arts Building
- 2 p.m.** — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage
- 2:30 p.m.** — Melody West Presents, Community Stage
- 3 p.m.** — Putting Fuchsias to Bed — “How to Winterize Your Fuchsia,” Floral/Ag Building
- KACS 90.5 Family Day Concert: Land Of Color, Saloon Stage
- 5 p.m.** — KACS 90.5 Family Day Concert: Apollo Ltd, Unspoken, Saloon Stage
- 6 p.m.** — Dazzling Deceptions Magic Show, Community Stage

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FAIR MAP



Stages:

1. Saloon Stage
2. Community Stage
3. Midway Stage

Animals:

4. Horse Stalls
5. Petting Zoo
6. Pig Barn

7. Poultry & Pigeon Hall
8. Small Animal Building
9. Wildlife Building
10. 4-H Barn (Cattle: Dairy, Beef)
11. Blue Pavilion (Goats, Sheep)
12. 4-H Building
13. Beer Garden
14. Living Arts
15. Concession Stand
16. Expo Hall
17. Fire House
18. Floral & Agriculture Hall
19. Grange Building
20. Historical Building
21. Information Booth
22. Milking Parlor
23. New Judging Pavilion
24. Old Judging Pavilion
25. Photo Barn
26. Hobbies & Crafts

Elephant Ears, Gyros, Fried Squid-on-a-Stick?

Longtime Favorites and New Food Items to Grace Southwest Washington Fair

By Eric Rosane

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Delicious fair favorites, as well as a number of new food items, will grace the upcoming Southwest Washington Fair this year.

Pat Slusher Jr., the fair's senior events manager, said attendees will be delighted to know that at least 32 food concessionaires will be at this year's fair. Foods of all kinds — elephant ears, pizzas, Philly cheesesteaks, crepes, Hawaiian food, barbecue, gyros, and the fair-favorite Chehalis Rotary corn-on-the-cob — will be available for ravenous fairgoers.

"People have all their favorites they come and eat every year," Slusher Jr. said. "It's all very traditional. It's a big part of this fair. The food is as big a deal as the entertainment or anything else.

People come to this fair to eat."

The list of new foods and gluttonous oddities is intimidating — Cajun, New Orleans, Hungarian beef crepes — though none perhaps more than Omoto Teahouse's specialty fried squid-on-a-stick. Slusher Jr. said if there's any new food regulars should try, it's this one.

"It looks very interesting," he said.

Other new food vendors include Longview-based The Islander, a Hawaiian-inspired catering food truck; the Hungarian Hut; Route 66 Pizza; and Captain Pat's Philly cheesesteak.

Returning favorites include Tacos El Rey, Colossus Gyros, barbecue favorites, Marsalee's Thai, scones and a pair of coffee stands. Slusher Jr. said the Rotary beer garden will make a return for the rodeo this year and one of the concert performance series. Local 4-H clubs will host a pie stand, as well.

Slusher Jr. said Rotary Club of Chehalis's corn-on-the-cob is a tradition for any regular attendee worth their salt.

"People always traditionally end their night at the fair by grabbing a corn on the cob," Slusher Jr. said. "We have, for a fair our size, a huge food lineup."

If he had to pick a favorite, Slusher Jr. said his is the bratwurst and corn-on-the-cob vendors. But that's picking from a robust and tasty arsenal of vendors.

"They all work hard on their quality, and it's not just hamburgers and hotdogs. We have a real diversity; we have tacos, we have Hawaiian, we have Greek gyros — I mean, there's just a real variety," he said.

Food concessionaires will be open 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sunday.



File Photo

A boy bites into corn on the cob, a favorite for fair attendees.

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The 39th Annual Demo Derby Set to Return to 2021 Fair

By Eric Trent

etrent@chronline.com

The sounds of hopped-up V8 engines redlining, vehicles smashing into each other and pieces of twisted metal flying into orbit is set to fill the air at the Southwest Washington Fair this year.

With the 2020 fair canceled due to the pandemic, spectators will get the chance for the first time since 2019 to sit in the grandstands and watch drivers do their best to cause as much destruction as possible to their competition. It's as close to "Max Max" as it gets.

The 2021 edition will include 15 drivers in Tuesday's domestic/big-car derby, while Sunday will have both the import derby and domestic derby.

Promoter Lee Stiltner is one of the founding members of the Lewis County Demolition Derby Association, which was formed in 1982. He was 15 years old at the time and has been involved with it ever since.

He said the only thing that's changed over the past 39 years is it's harder to find and purchase the older-style cars that are needed to hold up to the punishment of a derby. Some of the same parts of vehicles that were metal back in the day are now plastic on newer vehicles.

He said 15 cars is about the typical size of the derby in recent years, while in the past numbers have reached 40-50 vehicles.

"Over the years, it's dwindled down because of the difficulty of being able to find these older, big cars to use," Stiltner said. "The older cars are either used up or now worth so much more than they were that you can't afford to derby them."

Years ago, drivers could find old junkers that were donated to them because the previous owners wanted them gone. It would only take a couple hundred dollars to modify them for competition.

Now, drivers pay upwards of \$1,000 to buy a car and then put another \$500-\$600 minimum worth of modifications into them. Competitors add radiator protectors, roll bars, door bars and engine cradles to protect the motors, just to name a few.

And drivers will use the same car year after year, Stiltner said, cutting, welding and repairing everything in the offseason.

"If it can be repaired and made to run again, some of these guys will fix it and run it in another derby," Stiltner said. "Some of these guys use these cars anywhere from two to five derbies."

The defending 2019 champion, Toledo resident Josh Levine, outlasted five other competitors with his 1978 pastel white Chrysler Cordoba.

A single derby lasts about two to two-and-a-half hours, Stiltner said, and he hopes to see the grandstands full this year. The 2020 derby on the Fourth of



File Photo

Vehicles collide as they round a corner during the Demolition Derby at the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds.

July was down to just barely enough cars to run a derby because everyone was saving their vehicles for the fair.

"I'm hoping for a good turnout of cars," Stiltner said. "If we can get anywhere from 12-15 cars, it makes for a

pretty good finale. It will be a bigger show because we'll have one for the big cars and one for the small."

The big-car derby begins at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 17. The import derby starts at noon on Sunday, Aug. 22.



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Horses: A Mane Event at SWW Fair

By Isabel Vander Stoep

isabel@chronline.com

Saddling up for a week at the fair with a horse isn't all glitz and glam. Showing any livestock is hard work through long, hot hours of the fair. But horse events aren't just contained to a set few days.

They happen all week.

Some 100 kids normally participate in 4-H horses at the Southwest Washington Fair. This year, there are just 37 riders and only two from outside Lewis County. Anne Hamilton, 4-H horse superintendent at the fair, said between 4-H's recommendations and the state's restrictions, there was uncertainty about whether the event could be held.

"On the horse end of things we had to do a big gut rush to put this on for the kids," Hamilton said.

Because there's such a low turnout, she wanted to make the event special for the kids who are participating. Normally, kids just receive blue ribbons for their awards. This year, with the help of sponsor Com-

munity First Auto Centers in Chehalis, event winners will get belt buckles — the most prestigious prize in horse showing — among other prizes such as tack, hay, feed and more.

4-Hers are all judged on "herdsmanship," the ability to care for their horse's needs, and in each category they choose to compete in. Competitions possibilities span the entire list of equestrian events: showmanship on the halter, all the western events, trail (which can be done western or English), all the English classes, dressage and all gaming events.

For most events, around 10 riders can advance to the state fair. Hamilton says Lewis County kids have an advantage at state because at the Southwest Washington Fair, they are required to begin and end their events in "stopping boxes," or outlined areas for the horse to stay inside. This is common practice at state, but some counties choose to forego the stopping box because it is considered very strict, so those riders don't get a chance to practice it.



File Photo

Some 100 kids normally participate in 4-H horses at the Southwest Washington Fair. This year, there are just 37 riders and only two from outside Lewis County.

Horse owners at the Southwest Washington Fair also have the benefit of participating in fun events hosted by the Horse Activities Sponsorship Club (HASC), which awards scholarships and other prizes to event winners. For the riders who show at the fair all their lives, those scholarships can make a serious difference when it comes time to pay for post-high school education.

One of the HASC events, called "Ride a Buck," has riders go bareback on their horses with a \$1 bill under their thigh. Riders go from a walk, to trot, to run and are disqualified once the dollar falls down. The last kid holding their dollar gets to keep all the fallen money.

These kinds of events offer extra incentives to participate in the fair, but the kids need to be dedicated to the process long before it begins.

The first steps in horse showing begin over a month prior to the event. Hamilton hosts clinics once a week in July for riders and their horses. These teach the students the intricacies of fair events such as how to

avoid disqualification and how to enter and exit the arena safely. She also goes through safety checks to ensure horses and their riders are able to show without significant risk of injury.

As horses enter the fairgrounds on the week of the fair, they undergo a full veterinary check to ensure they are healthy enough to enter a barn full of other animals and to once again check that the horse will

not have anything hindering its ability to safely perform. This process is the standard for agricultural fairs and applies to all livestock.

Then, they begin the grueling, yet rewarding process of the fair. Hamilton has been a 4-H leader for 24 years, and in that time she has witnessed hundreds of riders come out

of the barn on Sunday stronger than they were when they arrived.

"They learn a lot showing anything (at the fair), not just horses, anything is fabulous," Hamilton said. "Responsibility, empathy, pride, courage, it's huge. ... They're gritty kids, literally and figuratively."



For most events, around 10 riders can advance to the state fair.



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Rodeo and Wild Horse Races Return for a Night of Thrilling Entertainment

By Emily Fitzgerald
emily@chronline.com

Horses and livestock will be a regular sight at the fair all week, but if you want to witness horses, bulls and sheep doing everything in their power to buck their riders, see teams race wild horses or watch riders rope livestock, then you want to be in the grandstands Saturday night.

The Rodeo and Wild Horse Race starts at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 21, and will feature mutton busting, wild horse races, bull riding, saddle bronc riding, ranch bronc, breakaway roping and bareback riding.

“The rodeo is very similar to the previous rodeos we had in 2019,” said Connie Riker, parks and recreation and events director for the fairgrounds.

Attendees should expect an action-packed night full of events that are guaranteed to thrill.

To keep the action going between events, Miss Pro West Rodeo Queen and other entertainers are scheduled to perform.

The wild horse races, which became part of the rodeo in 2018, are already a popular element to the event. Teams of three start with a wild horse that already has a rope around its neck and race other teams to get their horse to complete a set pattern.

Unlike most fair events, where participants are required to register well in advance, most rodeo participants don’t register for the evening’s events until the day-of. Only the kids participating in mutton busting — an event similar to bull or bronc riding, except the competitors ride or race sheep — need to register in advance.

Given that the rodeo was canceled alongside the rest of the fair last year, Riker is expecting a large turnout at this



File Photo

A rodeo clown peeks out of a bucket as a bull rider begins to lose his grip during a rodeo at the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds.

year’s event.

“I think it’s fantastic that we have such a great rodeo committee this year

and the fact that the regular community can partake in these rodeo events is great,” said Riker.

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Southwest Washington a Fair: A Celebration Dating Back to 1877

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This brief history of the fair was first published in 2006.*

It all began in 1877, when Washington was still a territory. An association was organized for the purpose of promoting “the advancement of agriculture and to aid in developing the resources of Lewis County, which are mainly agricultural, and needing the stimulus of friendly competition to advance them beyond the first rudiments of agriculture which are generally found in a new country.”

On Nov. 21, 1882, the Lewis County Agricultural Association was incorporated and its fair was held in Chehalis on Oct. 6-9, 1891. Successive fairs, under the direction of the Lewis County Agricultural Association, were held until the early summer of 1907.

An item found in the files of the Lewis County Historical Museum reports that the first fair was held in 1891 “somewhere in the vicinity of South Market Street

in Chehalis about where Fullers Market Basket store is presently located.”

We learn from a 1987 item in The Daily Chronicle that certain harness and other horse racing enthusiasts were not satisfied with the fair as it was. They made many trips in the early 1900s to the state Legislature in Olympia, to persuade that body to provide funding for their dream of a racing venue and new fair facility here.

Their dream became a reality when, in 1908, the Legislature agreed to provide some funding for the fair while stipulating it be held between Chehalis and Centralia. The new fair was to serve a six-county area consisting of Lewis, Thurston, Mason, Grays Harbor, Cowlitz and Pacific counties.

According to “Centralia: The First Century,” we learn that an option for 30 acres of land was secured for the new fair site from a Mrs. Somerville, for \$200 per acre. The amount was raised in equal



File Photo

Youths pose around a Cowlitz Prairie Cattle Club sign at the Southwest Washington Fair in 1952.

shares by the two towns in less than 30 days; the option was taken up and the deed secured.

Numerous buildings, including a grandstand and a half-mile racetrack, were completed in time for the first fair at the new site in late September of 1909, but all didn't go so smoothly.

“The weatherman did not cooperate with the first fair as it was deluged with five days of continuous downpour. The rainy debut, however, did not dampen the fair's progress and it soon became known as an outstanding showplace and as the home of the finest harness horse track in the region,” we read in the Aug. 13, 1982, The Daily Chronicle.

“Through the support of racing stables up and down the West Coast, trotters and pacers were able to compete at the fair's oval,” the article went on. “Competition in the livestock departments stimulated interest in breeding fine cattle. Consequently, Lewis County and surrounding areas began flourishing as a source of excellent dairy and beef cattle for breeding purposes.”

With its up-and-down financial issues, the fair was suspended in the late 1920s. In 1935, it returned, and continued to operate until the start of World War II. Little is known about this period or the specific

reasons for the fair's closures.

The fair resumed operation after the war under the management of a Carl Hampe. He was followed by the noted Arthur W. Ehret, who worked closely with the new fair board to renew the former prestige of the fair.

“Perhaps one of the outstanding accomplishments during Ehret's time was construction of a dike on the south portion of the grounds adjacent to Salzer Creek,” we read in The Daily Chronicle, July 25, 1987.

“The dike prevented the annual inundation of all the fair buildings, which were not built high enough to prevent flooding.”

However, even with the dike, flooding was not prevented some years.

“The 1972 break in the dike resulted in flood damage to the fairgrounds of nearly \$500,000. Many of the damaged facilities were replaced and other buildings gradually modernized. The dike broke again in November 1986, however, with heavy water damage being sustained by the fair office. The office has been relocated to a building near the fairgrounds' south entrance.”

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Bartel Held Little Miss Friendly Cape For Two Years; Now, a New Friendly Face Will Reign

By Claudia Yaw
cyaw@chronline.com

After COVID-19 canceled the Southwest Washington Fair — and subsequently the coronation of a new Little Miss Friendly — 2019 winner Haiden Bartel kept her title for two years. She was the first Little Miss Friendly to do so in the program’s 53 years.

And this year, Bartel — a sixth grader who has her eyes set on Miss Lewis

County and a career in pediatrics — will pass on the honor to another young girl who represents the fair with grace and personality.

“It teaches them poise and interview skills and how to talk to people. Plus, community service,” said Little Miss Friendly Coordinator Sue Barlow.

After being interviewed by a panel

.....

Continued on **PAGE 16**



Little Miss Friendly 2019 - Haiden Bartel



File Photo
Little Miss Friendly 2017 - Reese Coleman

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A black and white photo of a young child wearing a cowboy hat and a dark jacket, looking towards the camera.

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Continued from **PAGE 15**
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of judges, applicants will be narrowed down to a group of five. And on Aug. 17, opening day of the annual fair, Bartel will say her goodbyes and welcome in a new era of Little Miss Friendly.

Local event organizer and musician Jerry Owens, whose granddaughter held the position in 2006, will emcee the ceremony.

The “living logo” is unique to the

Southwest Washington Fair, and is expected to attend all six days of the much-anticipated fair with her parents, sporting her sash and cape, plus festivals and events throughout the year.

The contest began in 1968 as a way to market the event and boost attendance, according to Julie McDonald Zander’s “Chapters of Life at the Southwest Washington Fair.”

Making a child the face of the fair just made sense: someone cute and bubbly

who would appeal to all fairgoers and represent the friendliness of Southwest Washington.

During that first race for the title — which came with a new bike and the original snazzy blue felt cape — over 100 young girls applied, and were judged on poise, personality and appearance.

In 1982, a set of 9-year-old twins were crowned together to serve as Little Miss Friendly: Danna and Donna Plumb.

While the line of young girls clam-

oring to become Little Miss Friendly is no longer in the triple-digits, the living logo is still a celebrated part of the community and fair decades later.

The youngster attends charity events, parades and festivals, and even sometimes gets to go on the radio. This year, she’ll be at events like Morton’s Loggers Jubilee and other festival favorites.

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Continued on **PAGE 17**



File Photo

Little Miss Friendly 2016 - Campbell Senter



File Photo

Little Miss Friendly 2018 - Natalie Butler

*Here's a look at past
Little Miss Friendlies:*

- 1968 — Susan Zimmerman
- 1969 — Sandra Hutchins
- 1970 — Lisa Nelson
- 1971 — Trina Elder
- 1972 — Janice Moe
- 1973 — Katherine Anderson
- 1974 — Brenda Elder
- 1975 — Nani Jackins

- 1976 — Sandra Ruth
- 1977 — Brenda Sines
- 1978 — Lisa Beesley
- 1979 — Julie Briggs
- 1980 — Margarita Roco
- 1981 — Gail Coddington
- 1982 — Cindy Fagerness
- 1983 — Kellee Tyner
- 1984 — Donna Plumb
- 1984 — Dana Plumb
- 1985 — Becki Bailey

- 1986 — Nicole Lunders
- 1987 — Traci Bartley
- 1988 — Katie Parypa
- 1989 — Tricia Piper
- 1990 — Leah Cooke
- 1991 — Katherine Fossett
- 1992 — Christina Ziese
- 1993 — Rachel White
- 1994 — Noelle Nelson
- 1995 — Angela Hansen
- 1996 — Delilah Murray
- 1997 — Brittany Lee
- 1998 — Becky Curfman
- 1999 — Corrine Kress
- 2000 — Kaylie Stanley
- 2001 — Abbey Ferrier
- 2002 — Macy Allaire

- 2003 — Cassidy Boles
- 2004 — Kendall Stanley
- 2005 — Minnie May Price
- 2006 — Bailey Peters
- 2007 — Shasta Lofgren
- 2008 — Gabrielle Wright
- 2009 — Josey Rosbach
- 2010 — Sophia DeTray
- 2011 — Sally Allaire
- 2012 — Madison Mencke
- 2013 — MaKale Mencke
- 2014 — Aubrie Morey
- 2015 — Rachel Gray
- 2016 — Campbell Senter
- 2017 — Reese Coleman
- 2018 — Natalie Butler
- 2019 — Haiden Bartel

LITTLE MISS FRIENDLIES



1968-Susan
Zimmerman



1969-Sandra
Hutchins



1970-Lisa Nelson



1971-Trina Elder



1972-Janice Moe



1973-Katherine An-
derson



1974-Brenda Elder



1975-Nani
Jackins



1976-Sandra Ruth



1977-Brenda Sines



1978-Lisa Beesley



1979-Julie Briggs



1980-Margarita Roco



1981-Gail
Coddington



1982-Cindy Fager-
ness



1983-Kellee Tyner

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