

Briefly Reminiscing the 1970s

The Fair during the 1970's is some of the most memorable days for many. Unfortunately for this article, the fair association minutes during these years are missing so the research data is from the fair books.

1970

The 1970 fair was held September 3, 4, and 5. The six owner clubs continue to sponsor the fair: Bolar Ruritans, Stonewall Ruritans, Blue Grass Ruritans, Mill Gap Ruritans, Monterey Lions Club, and the Highland County Chamber of Commerce. The daily admission charge was \$0.75 for adults and \$0.25 for children (ages 6-14). A season ticket which included free parking was \$1.50 for adults and \$0.75 for children.

The following were committee chairs: Arts and Crafts—Mrs. Helen Cleek; Catalog—Mrs. & Mrs. J.C. Pritchard; Commercial Concessions—Fred Frye; Dance—W.R. Stephenson, Jr.; Dog Show—Fred Gumm; Entertainment and program—M.M. Folks; Field Crops—John Robert Cleek; Flower Show—Monterey Garden Club; Grounds—Russell Waggy; Ham Show & Auction—Austin Shepherd; 4-H Club Projects & Food Exhibits—Elizabeth Ellett; Horse Shoe Pitching—Garland Carpenter; Horse Show—Mack Ratcliffe; Hunter-Fishermen Trophies—Bruce Richardson; Kiddie Show—Mrs. Janet Marshall; Lighting—Darwin King; Livestock—Roy Waggoner & Elmer Helmick; Parade—Ralph Lohr; Ribbons & Tickets—Betty Hansel; and Traffic—local police officers.

On Wednesday night, the fair dance kicked off the fair at 8:30 p.m. which was held at the School. Exhibits were entered on Thursday morning with judging at 11:30 a.m. The Light Horse and Pony Show began at 12:30 p.m. A Bicycle Safety Rodeo was held at 2:30 p.m. The parade was held on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. followed by "The Jim Eanes Show with The Party-Timers" performing at 8 p.m. This show featured Glenn Howell of WSLs-TV and radio. On Friday, the 4-H and FFA Livestock Show commenced at 8:30 a.m. followed by the open livestock show. At 2:00 p.m. the Kiddie Show was held and a Tractor Operator Contest was held at 2:30 p.m. The Ham Show and Auction began at 7:30 p.m. just before the nightly entertainment by The Gospel Journeymen Quartet at 8 p.m. On Saturday at 10:30 a.m. the dog show was held. At 1:30 p.m., the afternoon Horse Show was held followed by the evening show at 7:30 p.m. The horseshoe pitching contest was held at 2:30 p.m. Fireworks were the grand finale at 10:30 p.m.

The following livestock classes were offered: Suffolks, Southdowns, Dorsets, and Hampshires were among the local sheep breeds. Herefords, Angus, and Shorthorns were leading cattle breeds. Other livestock included rabbit, poultry, turkeys, ducks, and geese. Small grains entries were still common, including oats, wheat, barley, and rye. The 4-H and FFA exhibits were in a separate section and included canned fruits and vegetables, cakes, candies, cookies, breads, clothing, laundry, handicrafts, and display of vegetables. Adult food exhibits included several sections of entry. The bread entries included: salt rising bread, whole wheat bread, white loaf, biscuits, rolls, and muffins.

The country cured hams included two divisions: smoked and sugar cured. Classes were 12 lbs. and under; over 12 lbs. to 20 lbs., and over 20 lbs. Prizes were 1st-\$3; 2nd-\$2; and 3rd-\$1. The grand champion received \$5 with \$4 for the reserve placing plus bragging rights. All hams shown were sold with a 5% selling commission. Benny Terry usually auctioned the hams.

Knitting offered 18 classes plus 14 classes under crocheting. The Dog Show offered an open Junior Showmanship class for youth 16 years old and under.

1971

The 1971 fair was very similar to the 1970 fair. The fair dance was held at the Blue Grass Elementary School. Miss Virginia Beverage was the only change in committee chairs as she was co-chair for the arts and crafts department. Thursday night's entertainment was a band concert and the bicycle rodeo was not held.

The Light Horse and Pony Show was held on Thursday. Classes included Musical Sacks, Costume Relay Race, Balloon Pop, Potato Race, and Horsemanship. In the musical sacks, horses must stay in dirt ring until music stops. One horse or pony on each sack. In the costume relay race, four riders to each mount or horse. At start, members of each team put on clothing, ride to far end of course to exchange with second member, etc. until all have completed race. First team to have finished without fault wins. The balloon pop has each entry wear a balloon tied to their right arm. Must break all balloons of other participants with hands only; last entry with balloon wins. The potato race had each participant start with a spear. Time started when contestant crossed start line. The contestant raced to the potato box, circled and speared a potato while going around it. Contestants were not to dismount. The contestant raced to finish line. A rider was disqualified if his horse stepped in the potato box.

1972

The 1972 fair was held August 31 to September 2. Admission rates were increased. Daily admission for adults was \$1.00 with a season ticket at \$2.50. A few committee chairs were changed. Miss Virginia Hooke co-chaired with Mrs. Helen Cleek in the Arts & Crafts department; Mrs. Linda Johnston took charge of the catalog; Albert Shultz lead the dog show; Mrs. Mary Sweitzer took charge of the entertainment & program; Benny Terry coordinated the Ham Show and Auction; C.E. Hammer led the Horse Show and Austin Shepherd led the Junior horse shows. Fred Frye took over the ribbons and tickets. All other committee chairs remained the same as 1970.

The fair commenced with a fair dance on Wednesday, August 30. Exhibits were entered and judged on Thursday. The Light Horse and Pony Show was held at 1:30 p.m. with the parade at 6 p.m. On Thursday evening the entertainment was a country and western band "The Second Generation." On Friday, the Western Square Dancers entertained at 8 p.m. The Valley Four Quartet entertained on Saturday night.

Potted plants were part of the flower show, included African violets, Begonia, Coleus, Tuberous Begonia, and Geranium. In the Adult artist division, the theme was "Say It with Flowers." Classes included: "Dear Old Dad"—an arrangement for Father's Day; "Here Comes the Bride"—A nosegay to be exhibited in a goblet but must be removable; "See You in Church on Sunday"—Arrangement suitable for church; "Meet You at the Beach"—arrangement featuring driftwood with water interest; "Silver Wedding Anniversary"—arrangement for a dining or buffet table.

1973

The 1973 Fair was held August 30 through September 1. In addition to daily admission, grandstand admission was charged. Full day rate was \$0.50; beginning at 6 p.m. \$0.25; Thursday evening country music show was \$0.50. All of the 1972 entertainment was planned for 1973 except the Wednesday night fair dance which was not held. On Friday, a horse pulling contest was added at 6 p.m.

A class was added under dairy heifers. The classes included dairy heifers 3-6 months, 6-12 months, and 12-18 months old. A pet lamb class was added in 1973.

The 1973 officers were president—L.H. Bratton; vice president—M.E. King; Secretary—F.H. Campbell; Treasurer—Fred Frye; and general manager—Russell Waggy.

1974

The 1974 fair was a Thursday through Saturday event. On Thursday evening the Tsugundi Indian Dancers were new entertainment. On Friday evening, a tractor pulling contest was held at the grandstand, and on Saturday evening a barbershop quartet performed in the cafetorium. Grandstand admission remained at \$0.50 per day.

In the foods department, creative use of mixes was added. Items were judged on the way the mix was “dressed up” to create a different product. The canned meats classes include: beef, chicken, pork sausage, pork tenderloin, ribs and/or backbones, and venison.

The tractor pulling contest was limited to contestants from Highland, Bath and Pendleton Counties. Classes included 5000 pound, 7000 pound, 9000 pound, 12000 pound, and 15000 pound. Garden tractor classes included 800 pounds, 1000 pounds, and 1200 pounds.

Committee changes included: Millicent Rundgren with 4-H projects and food exhibits, Bob Kelly coordinated the tractor pulls, Toby Swecker took leadership of the Kiddie Show, and Winfree Gutshall chaired the parade committee.

1975

The 24th annual Highland County Fair was held August 21-23. A season ticket was \$3.00 for adults and \$1.50 for children. Grandstand admission for the Tractor Pulling Contest and Horse Show was \$0.50.

Following the 6 p.m. parade on Thursday, Charlie Louvin and the Big Men from Nashville performed at 8 p.m. The Kiddie Show was moved to 3 p.m. on Friday followed by the Tractor Pull at 6 p.m. and Western Square Dance in the High School. Saturday's events included a dog show, horse show, horseshoe pitching contest, ham show & auction, gospel sing—The Upward Way, and fireworks.

Exhibits were entered on Wednesday evening. Miss Ardis Reigsecker took charge of 4-H projects and food exhibits.

Officers during 1975 included Fred Frye—President; M.E. King—Vice President; F.H. Campbell—Secretary; David Johnston—Treasurer. General Manager was Robert Kelly.

1976

Ernest Tubb and the Texas Troubadours entertained during the 25th annual fair. Showmanship classes in beef, sheep, and dairy were added to the livestock show. Very few changes were made on the events schedule and the officers remained the same. Fair photos were added to the fair book for the first time. Columbia sheep were added to the sheep show.

1977

The 1977 fair was held over four days. Wednesday, August 31, exhibits were entered from 4-9 p.m. The Tractor Pulling Contest was held at 6 p.m. On Thursday, September 1, exhibits were judged starting at 11:30 a.m. The parade started at 6 p.m. followed by a performance from Sonny James at 8 p.m. On Friday, the 4-H & FFA Livestock show began at 8:30 a.m. followed by the Open Livestock Show. The Kiddie Show was held at 2 p.m. at the grandstand. At 5 p.m. the Tractor Pulling Contest continued. On Saturday, the dog show started at 9 a.m., horse show at 1:30 p.m., Horse shoe pitching contest at 2:30 p.m., the ham show & auction at 6:30 p.m., the evening horse show at 7:30 p.m., and The Crum Family performed the gospel show at 8 p.m. in the cafetorium.

Admission increased to \$5 for an adult season ticket.

Doughnuts were added to the food exhibits under the cookies and doughnuts section. Photography was added to the Arts and Crafts department.

Mini Modified Tractors and Four-wheeled drive vehicles were added to the tractor pull, which was held on Wednesday. The Friday pull included farm tractors, stock block tractors and modified tractors. The Young Farmers coordinated the tractor pull.

1978

Grandpa Jones entertained on Thursday evening of the 1978 Highland County Fair. The Stewards were the featured gospel group for the Saturday evening entertainment. All other entertainment and events were the same as 1977.

The 1978 Fair Officers were Fred Frye—president; Bob Kelly—vice president; Roy Waggoner, Jr—Secretary; David Johnston—Treasurer. General Manager was Elmer Helmick. Committee chairs were: Dorothy Leustig—arts and crafts; Ardis Reigsecker—sewing, food exhibits, and 4-H projects; Martha Kelly—catalog; Fred Frye—commercial concessions; Albert Shultz—dog show; Mary Sweitzer—entertainment; Austin Shepherd—agricultural exhibits; Monterey Garden Club—Flower show; Elmer Helmick—Grounds; Benny Terry—Ham show and auction; Highland County Young Farmers—Tractor pulling contest; Garland Carpenter—Horseshoe pitching contest; Karen Lohr—Horse show; Randy Richardson—Hunter-fisherman trophies; Toby Swecker—Kiddie Show; Darwin King—Lighting; John Moyers and Roy Waggoner—Livestock; Brenda Hammer & Bob Kelly—Parade; J.C. Pritchard—Publicity; David Johnston—Ribbons & tickets; and traffic—local police officers

1979

To wind up the 1970s, the 28th annual fair was held August 29 through September 1, 1979. Exhibits were entered on Wednesday evening. The four-wheel drive vehicles and mini modified tractors competed at 6 p.m. Dave and Sugar provided the Thursday night entertainment which followed the parade. The livestock show was held on Friday morning at 9:30 a.m. The Kiddie Show provided the afternoon entertainment followed by the tractor pulling contest at 5 p.m. Saturday had a full schedule. The dog show was held at 9 a.m. and the afternoon horse show started at 1:30 p.m. A sheep shearing contest was held at 2 p.m. The annual horse shoe pitching contest began at 2:30 p.m. The evening events included a ham show and auction at 6:30 p.m. followed by the 4-H and FFA Livestock Sale at 7

p.m. The evening horse show began at 7:30 p.m. The Crestman performed in the cafetorium at 8 p.m. The fireworks ended the event around 11 p.m.

Rambouillet sheep were added to the open livestock show. Changes to the committee chairs included, Jackie Stephenson and Donna Bedwell—arts and crafts; Martha Kelly and Brenda Rexrode—catalog; and Elizabeth Swecker—Horse Shows. Officers remained the same as 1978.

While looking back 35 plus years, we can share many good, fun-filled memories. It continues to be evident the mass numbers of volunteers that worked hard and continue to do so in order to offer a county fair with numerous opportunities where skills, arts, and crafts are demonstrated and exhibited; and giving an annual opportunity to re-visit neighbors, friends, and family.

By Kathy Beverage
Fair Association Secretary