

FESTIVAL: Gators and Bison and Elk OH MY!

Continued from Page 1

After some time walking around, enjoying rides and shopping for treasures, shoppers may become hungry and decide to stop at one of the food stands to eat. Or attendees might want to stop for a lighter snack at The Jerky Hut and try out their selection of 'gator, bison, elk, beef or venison jerky. The business was bought out by Ray Nelson III and his family about eight months ago.

They say that they are a local, family-run business that has really turned The Jerky Hut around. Nelsons stepson, Andrew Keheley, was at the Pioneer Festival booth as well to help run the family business. They strive to offer high quality, local and exceptionally tasty jerky to their customers and have a variety of meats and flavors such as garlic and ghost.

"Alligator [jerky] is really popular and so is the ghost," said Nelson. He says that it is due to only using a particular cut of the alligator meat and creating a great flavor. The ghost flavor refers to the ghost pepper used to flavor and turn up the heat, one of the hottest peppers in the world.

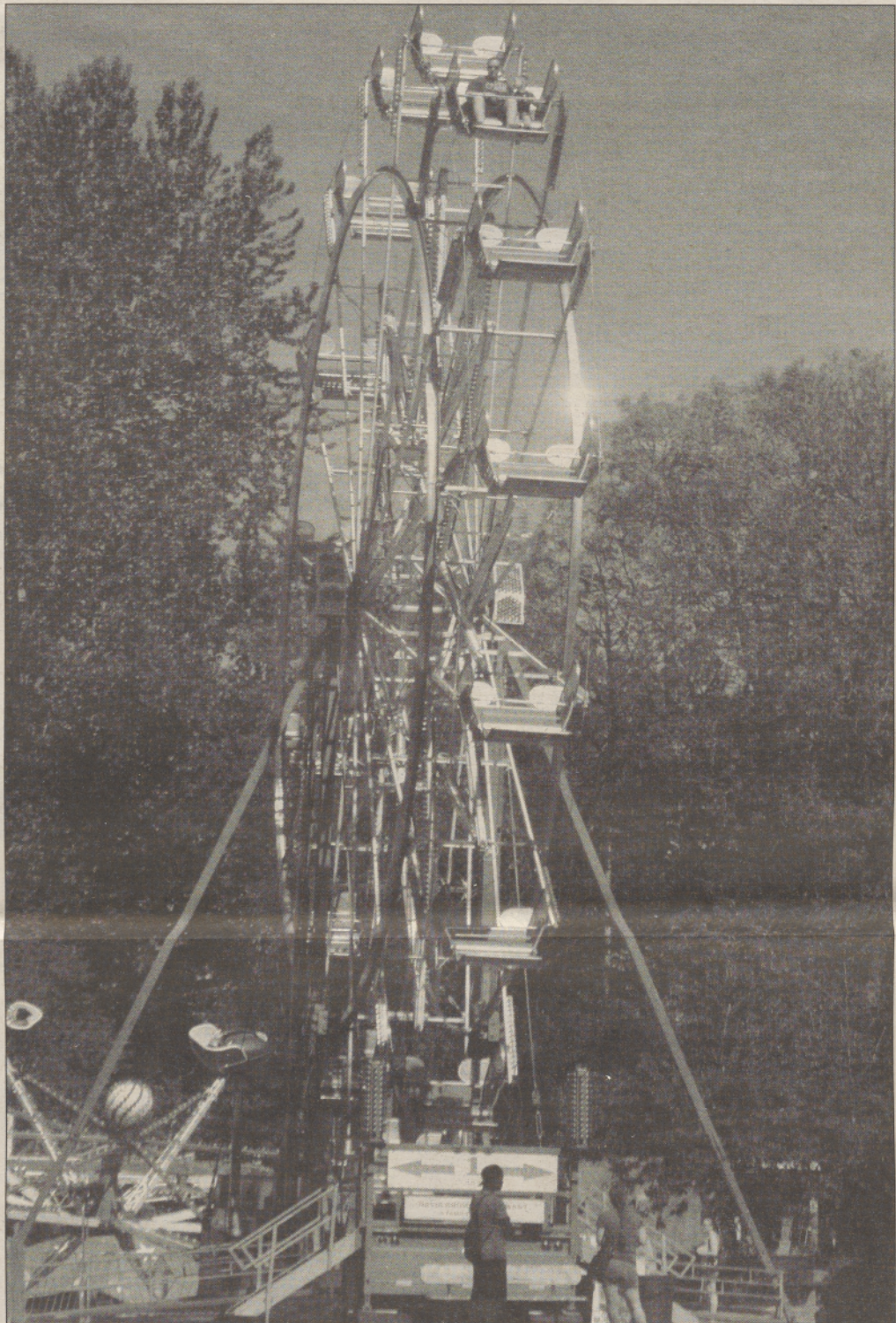
All of these vendors: Tom

Geil the hobbyist, Sheri O'Brien the historian and informant and Ray Nelson the local businessman all call him by first name, Rocky. But what is an art teacher and Oregon City Commissioner doing planning a festival every year for a decade and a half? He said that the funds from the festival go towards funding various youth programs in the area.

"The first year I did it, it was for Doernbecher's and since then it's been for the Optimist Club," said Smith. "We do the local high school grad parties, the summer reading program, have a partnership with JROTC"

One win-win from the partnership with the local JROTC program allowed the Pioneer Family Festival to have the parking lot staffed by volunteers and reduce chaos. In return JROTC received a \$1 parking fee "donation" per vehicle. This was a fairly popular option, even though there was a line of cars parked for free on each side of the road going into the park.

"This is probably the best, we've been doing the festival 15 years and this is the best, if not tied with the best. One year had 80 degree weather and I think the nice weather this weekend brought people down."



A favorite of all festival goers, the Ferris wheel was an impressive landmark at the Pioneer Family Festival. The classic ride was a popular attraction at last weekend's annual celebration.



Photos by Britiany Home The Clackamas Print


Sheri O'Brien smiles and shows off a new henna tattoo from a festival vendor.



Adults and children alike enjoy the dart throwing game. The goal is to pop balloons to win a picture prize. Almost every dart results in a popped balloon and many people walked away with prizes.



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