

Springfield Creamery's
Organic ICE CREAM SUNDAES
 with delicious fruit toppings
 at the Oregon Country Fair
 July 11, 12, 13
 Frozen Yogurt & Cookie-wiches, too!
 Nancy's Yogurt & Fruit Coolers
 Coffee & Milk
 Booth #125



TODD COOPER

Baby on Board

Negotiating the Fair in child-friendly ways

BY ADRIENNE VAN DER VALK

Parents with the desire to embrace the Oregon Country Fair's wild ride have some decisions to make and some planning to do. The Fair provides an amazing array of sensory experiences and opportunities for wonderment, but it can also be hot, windy, dusty, buggy, crowded, weird, rainy and smelly (to say nothing of overstimulating). When it comes time to introduce the very young to the very special place that is "the eight," experienced Fair-

mom Elise Crum has some common-sense pointers to share.

"If you can avoid a stroller ..." she says, searching for language strong enough to express her point, "I ... I wouldn't even attempt one. A backpack, a sling, a snuggly: If you can put the kid on your front and the diaper bag on your back, and carry both comfortably, that's the best."

Crum, who has taken all three of her children to the Fair as babies, introduced

her oldest son to the festivities when he was only 6 weeks old. Over the years, she and her little ones have consistently gravitated toward areas that are off the main loop. The Fair provides a stage devoted exclusively to children's entertainments as well as a Kids' Loop with play structures and running room and a Mellow Space for families who might need some quiet time. While these areas are baby- and kid-friendly, supervision is still required and incredibly necessary, according to Crum.

"It is very easy to lose sight of your kid," she says. Oregon Country Fair staff provide 24-hour lost-child assistance for panic-stricken family members who do get separated, but ideally, little hands stay held. Childcare is available two hours at a time for potty-trained tots, but for the very small, BRING Recycling provides diaper service from Energy Park. Cloth diapers, plastic storage bags and pins will be available, and diapers can be rented or returned during Fair hours.

As with any family outing, preparation can only prevent so much childish angst at the Fair (for adults or babies). Long days plus crowds are likely to equal the occasional meltdown, and ultimately it is up to parents to assess what their wee ones can and can't handle.

"The Fair is an extremely welcoming family event," Crum says emphatically. "Kids are being breastfed everywhere. It's an amazing way to expose your kids to new food and great music and new performers. It's a really nice place to hang out with your family. But if you have a kid who is easily overstimulated, don't take them." ★

7th Annual NORTHWEST STRING SUMMIT

Three Nights of
Yonder Mountain String Band
 with Darol Anger and Danny Barnes

Keller Williams, Keith Mosely (String Cheese Incident),
 Gibb Droll, and Jeff Sipe (Leftover Salmon)

Keller Williams solo Bill Frisell & Danny Barnes

Drew Emmitt (Leftover Salmon), Billy Nershi (String Cheese Incident) & Friends

Strings For Industry (Darol Anger, Tye North, Scott Law) Bryn Davies, Sharon Gilchrist & Friends

Great American Taxi featuring Vince Herman (Leftover Salmon) Greensky Bluegrass

Hickster featuring Benny "Burle" Galloway Pete Kartsounes Band Head for the Hills

String Summit Superjam (hosted by Danny Barnes)

JULY 18, 19, & 20 2008 HORNING'S HIDEOUT • NORTH PLAINS, OR

3-Day Passes AVAILABLE NOW. Includes Parking & Camping. Kids 10 & under are Free.

visit www.stringsummit.com for more info

TicketsWest (\$5) SAFEWAY
 503-224-7000 | 1-800-563-TIXX
 SUBJECT TO CONVENIENCE CHARGE www.ticketswest.com