

Morrow County faithful keep fair tradition alive

Fair has gotten smaller, but continues to attract locals

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
STAFF WRITER

The Morrow County Fair, in its 104th year, started on Wednesday and, by Thursday was bustling with a crowd of locals, some of whom have been coming to the fair for a long time.

"We were born and raised in Heppner," said Sandra Blanke, who was there with her brother and sister-in-law Gary and Doris Jones. "We entered in the fair when we were growing up. Our grandma often won blue ribbons."

Many of the longtime residents of Heppner said the fair has continued to attract a faithful crowd of locals, but acknowledged that it's smaller than when they first started attending — like the town of Heppner itself.

"The population differ-



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Janae Warren, 9, of Vancouver, Wash., holds a La Mancha/Boer cross goat kid at the Morrow County Fair in Heppner.

ence from when we were growing up, it's probably a third of what it used to be," Blake said.

But they noted that programs like FFA and 4-H were still going strong, thanks to the parents and teachers who keep them going.

One of those 4-H students is Heppner resident Faith Futter, 11, who entered two pigs in the fair. This year was her first experience showing

animals, and she said she had learned quite a bit from the experience.

"I decided to show to start saving money for college," Futter said. "And I just love (pigs). They're cute."

Futter's two pigs, Bubba and Lily, won red ribbons at the fair. Futter said she was hoping for blue, but was OK with the outcome.

She said she learned a lot about the care of the animals

— and that they often have a mind of their own.

"I like how they have different personalities," she said. "They can be very playful, or rude."

Ashley Price, 16, had been showing animals for a few years, but hoped this year would net her some top prizes for her steer, Midnight. The Boardman resident was busy spraying her animal with medium adhesive and pro gloss, as he stood patiently in a blocking chute.

"I love it," Price said. "It's a bigger animal, so it's more challenging, but gives you a step into the real world."

Price said she hopes to continue raising steers once she graduates.

People sat in the shade and ate lunch provided by the Bank of Eastern Oregon, whose staff volunteers to cook burgers and fries each year for fairgoers.

Joycekay Hollomon sat with her great-grandchildren, who were visiting from Alaska, and took in the scene playing out in her hometown.

She, too, noted the changes in the fair since she moved to Heppner 55 years ago.

"The people here work very hard to hold it together and make it work," she said.

"A lot has changed," Hollomon said. "It's diminishing, for one. We don't have nearly the interested population to keep the displays up. When I first started coming here, we had a carnival."

She commended the fair organizers for what they've done in the last few years, with exhibits like a reptile show and a bounce castle to keep kids entertained.

Hollomon said the fair has its own unique touches that keep people coming back. One, she said, is the rodeo.

"Friday and Saturday night is the big rodeo," she said. "But Sunday is strictly county. You have to be related or graduated from a school in the county to take part. It's kind of unique, and very laid back. They start with the little-bitty kids. It's kind of interesting if you have lots of people participating, which I'm lucky to

have a lot of."

Hollomon said throughout the years, she had helped out with various aspects of the fair, from 4-H sewing to supervising different events.

Fair secretary Ann Jones said the fair had undergone some changes in the last few years with board members and technology, but the overall event was consistent.

"We have a few new people, but it's mostly returning vendors," she said. Jones said there were about 30 vendors this year, including a woman selling waffles on a stick from Portland, and a lemonade stand from Curlew, Washington.

Deputies from the Morrow County Sheriff's Department said they'd be patrolling the grounds all weekend, but this year would be unique.

"It'll be interesting to see people coming in from the eclipse crowd, looking for something to do," said Deputy Glen Diehl. But he said so far, there had been no issues.

"It's a nice, quiet family atmosphere," he said.

Murder mystery skewers the host

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
COMMUNITY EDITOR

A delicious barbecue meal is featured during the upcoming murder mystery dinner theater event presented by Agape House.

However, before the barbie even gets fired up, a mate's getting skewered. With an Australian barbecue theme, the menu features a choice of maple bacon chicken or rotisserie pork loin. The meal, catered by Nookie's restaurant, also includes corn on the cob, baked beans and coleslaw. The

cost is \$30 per person.

"Bump Off at the BBQ" is Saturday at 5:30 p.m. at the Maxwell Siding Event Center, 145 N. First Place, Hermiston.

Guests are invited to enjoy the meal while attempting to crack the case before their chicken gets cold.

It seems someone is as mad as a cut snake at Willy Willy, the host of the barbecue. There are at least 6 potential suspects all with a reason to want him dead.

For tickets or more information, call 541-567-8774 or 541-571-7293.



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Trish Rossell of Hermiston acted in a past murder mystery fundraising dinner. Agape House is hosting "Bump Off at the BBQ" Saturday at Maxwell Siding Event Center.

Hermiston Herald



VOLUME 111 • NUMBER 34

- Gary L. West | Editor • gwest@hermistonherald.com • 541-564-4532
- Tammy Malgesini | Community Editor • tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com • 541-564-4539
- Jayati Ramakrishnan | Reporter • jramakrishnan@hermistonherald.com • 541-564-4534
- Jade McDowell | Reporter • jmcowell@eastoregonian.com • 541-564-4536
- Jeanne Jewett | Multi-Media consultant • jjewett@hermistonherald.com • 541-564-4531
- Shannon Paxton | Office coordinator • spaxton@hermistonherald.com • 541-564-4530
- Audra Workman | Multi-Media consultant • aworkman@eastoregonian.com • 541-564-4538
- Dawn Hendricks | Circulation District Manager • dhendricks@eastoregonian.com • 541-564-4540

To contact the Hermiston Herald for news, advertising or subscription information:

- call 541-567-6457
- e-mail info@hermistonherald.com
- stop by our offices at 333 E. Main St.
- visit us online at: hermistonherald.com

The Hermiston Herald (USPS 242220, ISSN 8750-4782) is published weekly at Hermiston Herald, 333 E. Main St., Hermiston, OR 97838, (541) 567-6457.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Delivered by carrier and mail Wednesdays
Inside Umatilla/Morrow counties.....\$42.65
Outside Umatilla/Morrow counties.....\$53.90

Periodical postage paid at Hermiston, OR.
Postmaster, send address changes to Hermiston Herald, 333 E. Main St., Hermiston, OR 97838.

Member of EO Media Group Copyright ©2017

Thank You



A huge **THANK YOU** to the Hermiston area businesses and individuals that donated to the Hermiston Little League Junior Baseball Team!

Your overwhelming generosity helped the team participate in a once-in-a-lifetime experience at the **Junior Western Regional Tournament** in San Jose, CA.

www.hermistonlittleleague.com

