

1980

Theme: "Focus '80"

The year of the Mount St. Helens eruption and ash fall resulted in much cleaning and roof damage. The south ticket gate near the office was closed. Entry to the Fair was at the north main gate.

The new Multi-Purpose Building located between the Home Economics Building and Highway fence was ready for displays of 4-H Home Economics, Photography, Cereals and Grains, and the Flower Show.

The Fair Board ruled it was no longer mandatory the Fair Queen candidates be presented on floats only.

A full meal barbeque was set up on the grounds. New to the Arena Show was the World Championship combine Race with 46 entries.

Grand Marshals: Gene & Margaret Hilty

Fair Queen: Kathy Wall, Tekoa

Rodeo Queen; Chris Mitchell, Colfax

Rodeo Princess: Holly Christopher

1981

Theme: "Future Harmonies"

The north end grandstand bleachers were removed and a model Blacksmith Shop built there. The grandstand was revamped with the new entrance ramp, remodeled upper lever box seats, a cement platform for box seats, and cement stairs at the south end.

The Threshing Bee was set up for Labor Day before the Fair and also gave a demonstration during the Fair. This procedure carried on through the years. EThis procedure carried on thought eh years. Education demonstrations were in the draft horse area and the new Blacksmith Show was in operation.

Fair Queen: Amanda Chevez, Tekoa

Rodeo Queen: Jolene Nelson, Colfax

Rodeo Princess: Kim Cox

1982

Theme: "Wheat, the Golden Staff"

The Fair Premium Book was a 7" x 11" tabloid supported with a 12" x 15" Colfax Gazette Supplement at Fair time with scheduled events, interviews, and advertisements.

Bob Suess, resident Manager, resigned effective following the fair. His wife, Betty, used the antique cook shack to feed participants in the Labor Day Harvest Bee.

Open class Home Economic Department changed the Home Arts Department to accommodate all types of entries including those of men and boys. New arena events were the bench press contest, mule riding, chariot races, and calf riding. Bob and Betty Suess were honored with a reception dinner and program for their many years of service. The Gene Hilty family set up a display of the fair's history.

Grand marshals: Dr. Orville & wife Bertha

Fair Queen: Elain Kwon, Pullman

Rodeo Queen: Dana Huseby

Rodeo Princess: Joan Bexdicex

1983

Theme: "Remember When..."

Marvin Newman was appointed Resident Manager replacing Bob Suess. He and wife, Nicki, moved into the fairgrounds home.

Lewis Organ built the Front Street Hotel and Drug Store combined it was named the Steiger Hotel. One of the older horse barns was torn down and replaced with two new ones.

Yakima Canutt and wife, alone with friend John Crawford, were asked to visit during the Fair. The Fair was rained out on Saturday.

Marvin Newman resigned as Fair Manager.
Grand Marshal: Yakima Canutt, Hollywood, CA
Fair Queen: Julie Coonrad, Pullman
Rodeo Queen: Carrie Allen
Rodeo Princess: Jackie Hereford

1984

Theme: "Memory Lane"

The "Thanks for the Memories" premium book lists the following: "The GREAT MEMORY for Whitman County is that the combination of productive land and energetic people has developed a Fair to be extremely proud of and a Fair that will grow in memories year after year."

Dave Noble was hired as resident Fair Manager. An updated mobile home was put in place at the fairgrounds for Dave and his wife, Linda.

Fair Secretary Pat Mensinger resigned and Sandra Elliot assumed the assumed the secretarial duties. When Sandra resigned in May, Lori Kilkenny was hired.

The spring machinery auction sale, which started in 1979, was held this year for the last time. Proceeds from these sales were put in a saving account to help fund a new grandstand.

The World Champion Combine Race was discontinued.

The Gun Club contract expired April 1st. and was not renewed.

The following incident made the headlines that year: "A gentleman drove into the parking lot and insisted that he should have parking close to the entry in a reserved area. The Sheriff's Posse member, with whom he was conversing asked for the driver's permit. He didn't have one, but said "I'm a commissioner!" The posse member knew the County Commissioners by sight and said, "You don't look like a Commissioner to me. You go park where I told you to."

It turned out the gentleman was a State Fair Commissioner who had come to evaluate and grade the Fair to determine the next year's state pari-mutuel funding. When he was finished and met with the Fair Board and Superintendents to review the overall fair he commented, "You've got a great system for parking cars and all I can say is DON'T MESS WITH THE SHERIFF'S POSSEE. THEY KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING AND THEY INTEDN TO DO IT!"

As a result, handicap parking was made available and reserved parking spaces were set up for the nurse, Veterinarian, and the State Fair Commissioner.

Grand Marshals: Henry Savage & Mrs. Martin Hendricksen
Fair Queen: Judy Martin, Rosalia
Rodeo Queen: Dana Sears, Pullman
Rodeo Princess: Lani Wigen

1985

Theme: "Side by Side"

Premium Book dedicated to Jenny Palmer, Oakesdale

A Fair is more than events its is agriculture and industry, parents and children, brothers and sisters, elderly and young, friends and neighbors, people and animals joining "Side by Side" to make the fair a success!

This was the first-year entries came in on Tuesday, were fudged on Wednesday and open for display on Thursday. The exception was the flower show and livestock.

Lori Kilkenny resigned as secretary. Debbie Wells was hired. For the first time, the Fair office was temporarily moved from the Public Service Building site to the fairground for the week of the fair with Tauna Hunt hired as summer office assistant. Grandstand and bleacher safety discussions resulted in the removal of the bleachers north of the grandstand, which were replaced with rented portables.

The policy of free fair passes for Fair workers was dismissed with the Fair Board vote for everyone paying their own admission. High school bands were asked to march with their own community float or buggy royalty.

Grand Marshals: Fritz Steiger and James Wysong

Fair Queen: Sundee Tucker, Pullman

Rodeo Queen: Carol Hall, Colfax

Rodeo Princess: Cory Julian

1986

Theme: "Smile Country Style"

The by-laws form 1979 were revised and accepted. Job descriptions were written for the Fair Resident Manager and the Fair Secretary.

The grandstands were declared unsafe for public use in their present condition by Whitman County Building Inspector, Leonard Riedner. The Palouse Empire Fair association by a vote of its directors, submitted a special levy in the amount of \$440,000 to Whitman County voters in September to build a new grandstand. The levy failed and the executive board (with County Commissioners) made a motion to send out bids for the total demolition of the grandstand except for the corner of the structure housing the electrical powerhouse.

Bleachers were used on loan form Colfax High School for the fair.

An eight-foot opening was cut in the middle of the Steiger Hotel to expand into an Ice Cram Parlor and to provide space for the scrapbook display.

A popular event in the Home Arts Department is the Sewing Activity contest where entrants sew, on site, a child's shirt in a 3-hour time limit.

Grand Marshal: Adrian DeVries 7 Jean Repp

Fair Queen: Laura Kerr, Pullman

Rodeo Queen: Renae White, St. John

Rodeo Princess: Susan Gilchrist, Colfax

1987

Theme: "Pride of the Palouse"

Dedicated in memory of Zaidee Parvin & Bob Suess

On January 26, 1987, the County Commissioners awarded a contract for the demolition of the grandstands. The County used revenue sharing funds to pay of the demolition. The Spokane Grand Prix bleachers were purchased for \$30,000 in August of that year so that there would be seating for fair events.

Zaidee Parvin, former Board president and active fair supporter, passed away this year. A spaghetti dinner was held in her honor and the proceeds put into a Grandstand Fund. Bob Suess, former Fair Manager, also passed away.

The Fair's pink cow logo was replaced on letterhead and envelopes with a wheat and rolling hills design.

A State Fair Special Assistance Grant, for \$14,000 funded a new roof for the Community Building as well as remodeling the restrooms by the Display Building.

Camper spaces in the past years were allowed along the fence by the highway during the fair time. Due to insurance restriction for commercial exhibitors, the camping area was moved to the present site of the R.V. park, constructed by volunteer crews.

Due to declining participation, the Fair Queen program was opened to any Whitman County High School junior girl who wanted to compete individually in the talent, poise and appearance, booster button sales, and essay competitions. A \$750 scholarship was awarded to the girl selected as queen with \$300 scholarships for the two queen candidates selected as princesses. All candidates selling booster buttons received 10% of their sales to help cover program expenses.

Grand Marshal: Don VanDyke, Rosalia

Fair Queen: Errin Cooper, Colfax

Rodeo Queen: Kam Poland, Colfax

Rodeo Princess: Desiree Jesse, St. John

1988

Theme: "Wheat, Toast of the Palouse"

The second grandstand levy for \$250,000 placed on the ballot failed to pass. A grant application to the Washington State Centennial Committee for fund to build a museum passed the county review level and was forwarded to the state for consideration.

New tax laws came into effect for off season facility rentals, storage fees, and camping at the fairgrounds. No longer exempt, all receipts for same must be taxed with the only exemption the four-day fair use.

The Colfax Kiwanis turned over the Sunday morning Cowboy Breakfast to a high school youth group. Dave Noble, Fair Manager resigned effective November 30. Debbie Wells was hired Interim Manager.

Grand Marshal: Felix Entenmann

The 1988 Fair was dedicated in memory of Ernie Dipple

Fair Queen: Kelly Coonrad, Pullman

Rodeo Queen; Sharla Strikzke, Colfax

1989

Theme: "There's A Fair in The Air"

A major event this year was the merger between the Parks and recreation and the Fair Departments, now known as the WHITMAN COUNTY PARKS, FAIR, AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES. As

a result, the Fair became a county department instead of operating as a separate entity with minimal county funding. Mike Werner became the Department Director; Debbie Wells was hired as full time Fair manager; the Fair Board became an advisory board instead of a regulatory board; and Bob Reynolds was hired as fairgrounds Operation Coordinator.

A \$7,000 State Fair Special Assistance Grant was received to build new sheep pens and place a sealant on the Home Arts building roof.

The Fair royalty program reversed to the traditional format of one queen and two princess candidates from each community. Fair entertainment included an appearance in outdoor arena by Joni Harms and her five-piece band. The stands were packed for this talented performer from Oregon.

Grand marshal: Clint Luce

Fair Queen: Carmen Fleming, Lacrosse

Rodeo Queen: Karina Heiting, St. John