



Camping under the Stars at the Fair

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

For years there have been campers and people camping at the Louisa County Fair. I was told that in the beginning, the Boysens were the first and they had two campers there.

Today, July 24, 2013, on the Fairgrounds, there are 45 campers and it is a "mini city," complete with neighborhoods, families, and "block parties."

Why the sudden surge of campers? First of all, it is not a sudden surge. For years, especially the last ten years, fair goers have known that camping is a lot of fun, and camping at the fair is just part of their summer vacation. On the practical side, Lori Beenan, a life-long fair goer, explained, "A camper provides a place for young people showing livestock, etc. to have a place to cool off, get a bite to eat, or more importantly, clean up and change clothes for their moment(s) in the show ring."

Then too, this surge is a result of the building of the new Youth Center and campground improvements. There are now camping hookups for both water and electricity. By fall, there will also be hookup for sewer, and it will be connected to the city system. The campground could be used almost all year. A side example: A family rents the Youth Center for a wedding reception. Out of town, or in town guests, could come and park their campers right outside the Youth Center and stay for a few days. How convenient, not to mention, "How fun!"

Some Natural Gas Pipeline workers from out of town have already been using the camping area while they worked here. The uses are endless. Also, any activity held at the fairgrounds, now provides a place for people to camp: car races, auctions, and fundraisers—the ideas go on and on. Rumor has it that this year's fair people were parking their campers over a week and a half ahead of time just to get a good spot!

Mike and Marcia Jamison and Dana Howell gave plenty of insight into the campgrounds. "The kids look forward to staying at the fair. At night, they have water balloon fights, play hide and seek around the buildings, and just have 'Good kid fun!'"

The meals at night are often coordinated, and tradition dictates that whoever wins the swine or beef grand championships provide the meat for one of the meals.

Lori Beenan and Joyce Howell reiterated this. "The campgrounds are a constant potluck. People sometimes make food in crockpots and leave them plugged in during the day, and the kids just run around and help themselves to whatever is available. Some contain meatballs, sloppy Joes, whatever works." Lori goes on to

say, "You never have to worry about where the kids are. They always come back, and if you think they're in someone else's camper, just walk around and look at the shoes outside. You can always find your own kid."

In the evening on Wednesday, I visited the camper "city" and found the Milders grilling lamb burgers and serving cake for two family birthdays. Next I came upon the Boysen group, and I was happy to find them since I now knew they would know the history of the fair camping. I first met Mary Boysen, who said she was happy to meet me but was on her way to play cards with a bunch of ladies getting together in the Variety Theater on the grounds. She pointed me in the direction of Larry Boysen, her husband and director of the campground.

Larry Boysen is a man with a twinkle in his eye and a love of the fair. Even though I had never met him before, he directed me to get a plate and help myself to all the food. They were one of the fair livestock winners this year who were providing fare, per tradition, for the campers. (The Larry Mincer family also fed campers after son Alex won the beef division). Larry Boysen is very modest as to whether he is actually a founder. He said as a kid he had slept at the fair in the back of a truck with straw, so there was "camping" even then. But he did admit that he and his wife, along with Bob and Joyce Huff, and Junior and Barb Keltner brought in the first actual campers and stayed at the fair, probably in the early 70's. It has mushroomed from there. Boysen put in electricity, saying it has been replaced six times and improvements are constantly being made, especially this year.

Boysen said the current price for camping is \$15 a night. "It's a pretty cheap vacation for a family, and there's lots to do. Everybody gets along and nobody cares. People are always walking around and the chief entertainment is just visiting." Duane Boysen added, "There is a real family atmosphere here."

Samantha Jamison, last year's 4-H queen and the daughter of Mike and Marcia Jamison, told about the fun of hanging out with friends at the campers and livestock barns. Her sister, Caitie, said that this year on the midway there was a balloon toss game where two of the prizes were swords and bullwhips. This added a lot of fun to the youth campers. Of course, too, there are the teen dances, a real favorite.

Right now after spending a couple of days at the fair in "camper city", I'm ready to move in. As Jed Clampett of the old TV show, "The Beverly Hillbillies" used to say, "Ye haw, man'd be a fool to leave a place like this!"



Milders grilling lamb burgers and serving cake



The Boysen Family



Jamison Family decorations for Camper Contest



Cooling off at the Campgrounds

Briefly -

Class of 1973 plans reunion

Attention CCHS Class of 1973: We are having our 40-year class reunion at the Thirsty Camel on Saturday, October 12, 2013. Happy hour, supper and a DJ to follow. Please R.S.V.P. to Cindy Clark Skubal at 319-430-0068 or cindyskubal@gmail.com. Please pass the word on to all our classmates.

Class of 1988 plans reunion

Attention CCHS Class of 1988: The 25-year reunion for the Class of 1988 is set for the weekend of October 11-12. Friday Night Family Fun at Chinkapin Park. Ride the float in Saturday's parade and supper at the Thirsty Camel. For more information and to R.S.V.P., contact either Nikki McFarland at 314-680-8899 or Theresa Hall at 319-461-9122 by July 31st.

Community Breakfast at Colonial Manor

There will be a community breakfast at Colonial Manor on Saturday, August 3rd from 6:30-8:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome! For more information, call Barb at 319-728-2276.

New location for Farmers' Market

A Farmer's Market is held every Friday afternoon through October 11 at the Youth Center at the county fairgrounds. Produce, plants, baked good and crafts for sale. WIC coupon, SNAP and senior nutrition coupons accepted. New vendors are always welcome. Please notice the new location.

Volunteers needed for Habitat for Humanity

Habitat For Humanity needs workers every Saturday starting at 8 am. Please come and help at Philadelphia St., Columbus City. To help with meals for the workers, call Trish Woepking 319-212-0187. To help with the building, please call Jeff Everett 563-554-1864. At noon, there will be a potluck at the Columbus City Town Hall. Our monthly meeting will follow.

Historical Society Car Cruise, Supper and Variety Show

Step back into time at the Louisa County Historical Society's "Hot Summer Nights" Car Cruise, supper, and variety show on Highway 61 in Wapello on Saturday, August 3, 2013. There will be lots of cars on display starting at 4:00 p.m., serving of grilled pork sandwiches, hot dogs and all the trimming will begin at 5:00 p.m., and the variety show at 7:00 p.m. Lots of talent from around the county will provide entertainment in the stage room. Come out for a night of fun, food, and fellowship.

Blood Checks at Senior Center

Blood checks will be held at the Columbus Junction Senior Center today, Wednesday, July 31st from 9-11 a.m.

Shellbark Club to meet

Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, August 8th at 11:30 at Winfield Twin Lakes Golf Course.

Spring Run Ice Cream Social

Spring Run Church, rural Winfield, will host its annual Ice Cream Social on Tuesday, August 6th. The menu again will include their famous hot chicken sandwich, beef burgers, baked beans, potato salad, pies, cake and, of course, homemade ice cream. Serving will be from 5-7 p.m. in the air-conditioned church. A free-will offering will be accepted for the meal.

UMW afternoon Social

The Columbus Junction United Methodist Women will entertain the Columbus City United Methodist Women for an afternoon social on Wednesday, August 7, 2013, at 1:30 p.m. in the Columbus Junction church. It is "Show and Tell," so please bring something you treasure with a story.

Wednesday Walks with CJ Striders

Join fellow community members for weekly walks on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM. We will meet in the Civic Center parking lot and walk various routes and distances each week. A regular walking schedule can help you lose weight, reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes and cancer, strengthen your muscles and even improve your mood.

Thirty Years and Growing Strong - Washington Genealogical Society to celebrate Anniversary

The Washington County Genealogical Society (WCGS) is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary this year. An open house will be held at various times August 8-9, 2013 in the Grayson Archives Room at the Washington Public Library, Thursday, August 8, from 3:00 P.M. and Saturday, August 10 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Society members and the public are invited to tour the library and see the extensive collections of books and records. There will also be several displays on local family and historical items of interest. Refreshments will be served.

The WCGS was formed in the summer of 1983. Seven of the original thirty-nine charter members are

still active members of the Society. Tom Dayton, one of the first co-presidents, has been the group's treasurer for the past 25 years. Rosamond Goodlander served as vice president and is the current recording secretary. Marj Neil and Lawrence Zuehlke, who performed in various leadership roles over the years, are still regular participants in the Society's activities. Linda Birney was historian and created the quarterly newsletter and is still maintaining the notebook collections of obituaries and other articles from various local newspapers. Cindy Juhl, the other co-president of the charter group, and Margaret Brinning, who served as president and worked on the newsletter, continue their quests for family history. A book has been compiled to honor the charter members and other long time members that laid the groundwork for the WCGS. The book consists of interviews, conducted by Laurie Wittmayer-O'Neill, with the

charter and other long-time members and also includes obituaries for deceased members collected by Marj Neil.

A member since 1985 and long term corresponding secretary, Margie Lasek, will provide an informative display of early towns in the county that are now ghost towns, at the open house. Margie has also compiled and had the WCGS newsletter published for years. Other current officers and volunteers will also be available at the open house to answer questions and do some cursory research for those attending. The other current officers are president, Ferd Marie, vice-president Janice Twinam, and librarian Susan Clark.

While the types of records collected and searched remain the same, the methods and tools have changed. Marj Neil described the initial development of the genealogy library as a single bookcase and shoeboxes. She would get the shoeboxes from

Brown's Shoe Fit and use them for filing index cards.

The original genealogy library was housed in the old Washington Public Library facility where the WCGS had access to the microfilm reader. Linda Birney recalled the Friday work sessions known as "Clippers and Pastors". The group would clip newspaper announcements of specific life events including births, marriages, deaths, reunions, and anniversaries. The information spans the decades from the mid-1800's to the present and provided the building of vital statistics notebooks maintained today. The work sessions continue today and are held on Mondays. Society members offer assistance with library research. Other than Mondays, members do not have set hours for being at the library, but are available on a random basis or appointments may be set up.

Eventually additional equipment was added to the genealogy li-

brary, including computers that were donated to the group by Dr. William (Bill) Burham. The Genealogy Library moved to its own room and present location in the basement of the new Washington Public Library in 2009. A sizeable donation from Charles E. and Isabelle Davis Grayson made the new Genealogy Library possible. Since the move, an anonymous donor has provided funding for the purchase of Macintosh computers, a scanner and printer. Two Elders from the Latter Day Saints assisted the WCGS with set-up of the new computer system. Contributions from the Riverboat Foundation were used to improve security of the genealogy library. The WCGS appreciates the generous gifts from its benefactors. Over the years and still today, people interested in preserving and sharing historical information donate books, family histories and various other archives. Volunteers and members rou-

tinely compile, organize and add information to the Genealogy Library.

The library is filled with hardcopy records pertaining to local births, deaths, marriages, cemeteries, churches, family and town histories, maps, schools, tax lists, wills and probate, and court records. Microfilm of newspapers, census, marriage and church records are also available. The WCGS is in the process of digitizing various hardcopy records. Scanning of the obituary records, published in local newspapers from 1900 through the present day, is in the works. Volunteers are needed to assist with this extensive and important effort.

The WCGS holds meetings on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM in the library. Programs are conducted during regular meeting times and topics usually include a presentation on a genealogical or historical interest. Visitors are welcome to attend the meetings and programs.

