

THE BEST WEEK OF SUMMER

PHOTO CONTEST
WINNER

LAILA MANNINO

BIG DREAMS IN
A SMALL TOWN
- CAUGHT UP IN
THE MAGIC OF THE
ARENA

2026 Grand Marshals

Cass County Fair website: The Cass County Fair is proud to recognize Terry and Becky Wilson as the 2026 Cass County Fair Grand Marshals.

Since the Fair's beginning, Terry and Becky have been dedicated supporters of the Cass County Fair and passionate advocates for the Pleasant Hill community. Together, they and their family have devoted countless hours to making our community a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

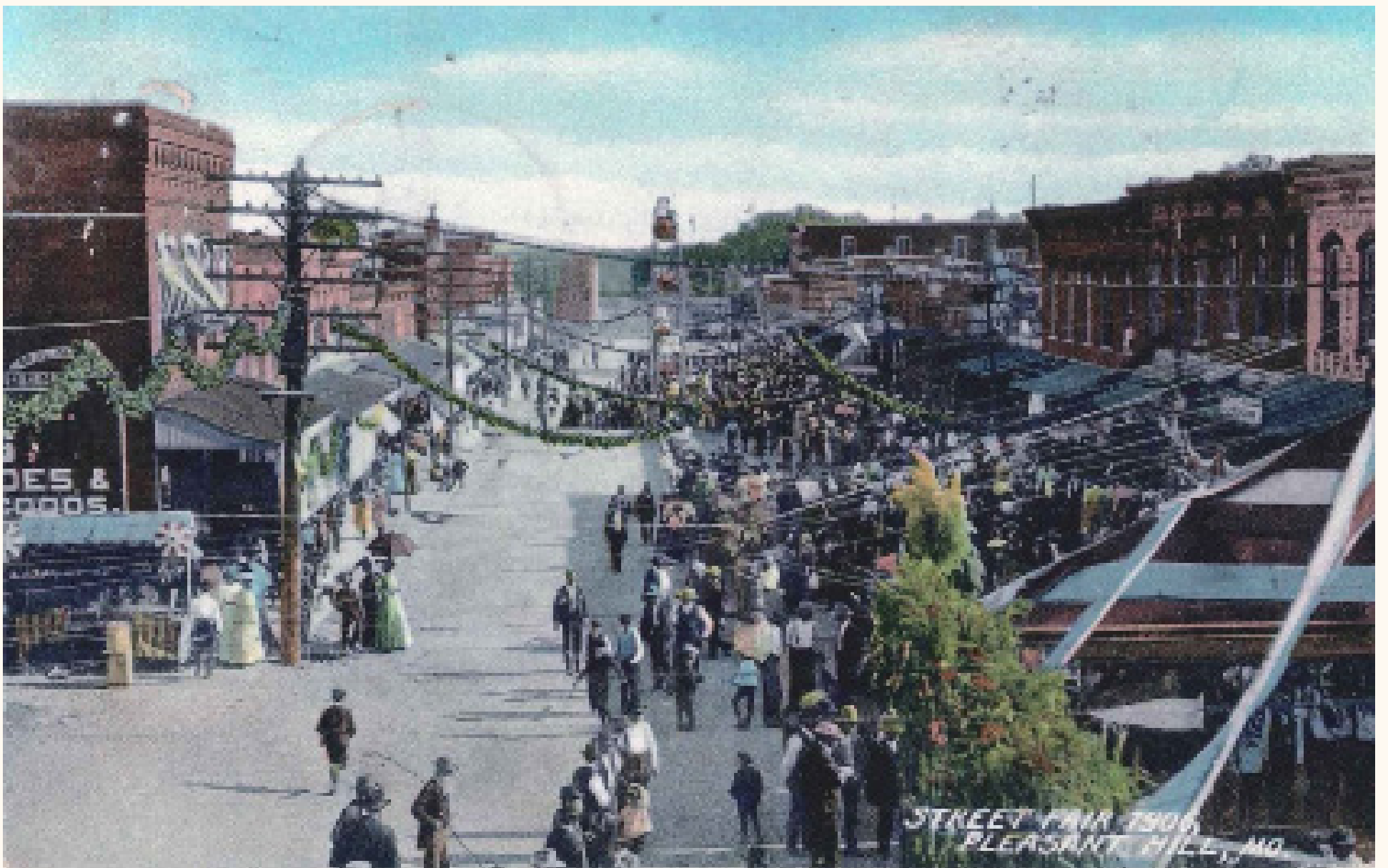
Becky served on both the Junior West Central Missouri District Fair Board and the adult West Central Missouri District Fair Board before it disbanded in 1977. She has also dedicated 53 years of service to Pleasant Hill Bank, now Goppert Financial Bank. Throughout the years, Becky has remained actively involved in the community, serving as Chamber of Commerce treasurer, volunteering with the recycling committee, and spending many hours working the ticket booth at the Cass County Fair.

When a small group of volunteers launched the first Cass County Fair in

Pleasant Hill in 1994, Terry was serving as Mayor. His commitment to public service began years earlier as a reserve Pleasant Hill Police Officer in the 1970s. He was elected councilman-at-large in 1976 and later became Mayor in 1980. Altogether, Terry served the City of Pleasant Hill for 30 years, including 26 years as Mayor.

One of Terry's lasting accomplishments was securing the property that is now home to the Cass County Fairgrounds. The 27-acre floodplain had previously been the site of a sawmill and was filled with old tires and a massive pile of sawdust. Terry obtained grant funding to remove the tires, sold the sawdust for more than the City had paid for the property, and oversaw repairs to the existing building so it could serve as a Meals on Wheels facility, providing a place to prepare and serve meals for the community.

Through Terry's leadership and Becky's unwavering support and service, the Wilsons have left a lasting legacy in Pleasant Hill. Their dedication to the Cass County Fair and to our community has touched countless lives, making them truly deserving of this honor.



1906 Pleasant Hill Street Fair (photo/Courtesy of the Pleasant Hill Historical Society)

History of the Cass County Fair Hosted by the City of Pleasant Hill

Researched and Submitted by Ron Rushly - from the City of Pleasant Hill website

Cass County Fairs: 162 year history
1900 Street Fair

Pleasant Hill can certainly be called the “fair city” of Cass County! Research at the Pleasant Hill Museum has turned up interesting historical facts that surround Pleasant Hill and the Cass County Fair.

Before 1900

According to the 1883 History of Cass and Bates Counties, the first fair was held in 1854. “The first fair was a rather primitive one. The ring was formed by stretching a rope around the ground to be used as such and the wagons and carriages were backed up for seats. These latter did not suffice and many of the lads and lasses made their seat on Mother Earth and her carpet of green.” Those early fairgrounds were located near where the weather station is standing today.

Civil war clouds overshadowed the fair after 1860. That same 1883 history says, “During the late Civil War, the Cass County Agricultural and Mechanical Association suspended its labors and fairs were a thing of the past. The grounds were held by the contending hosts, first one, then the other, for camping purposes; and, when peace once more cast its beacon of light and life upon the people, they felt more like building up their waste places than trying to reorganize the gala week of Ante Bellum Times. By 1868 the association was reorganized and Cass County had a fair again.”

The Pacific Railroad had come through south of town in 1865 and the town moved its downtown to the railroad where it remains today.

In 1870 the fairgrounds moved to the east of the new downtown where 58 Highway is now. There on 40 acres they built a beautiful fairgrounds, one of the best in the state. During this time, the association was reorganized again and named the Pleasant Hill Agricultural and Mechanical Association.

The history of 1883 contained an interesting quote about this organization: “The people of Pleasant Hill take pride in their annual fair and show a liberal as well as a commendable spirit in assuring their success.”

One hundred and twenty four years later that very same commendable spirit of volunteerism is what drives this successful Cass County Fair.

Street Fair

Crowds were reported to be as large as 15,000 people. 1940 was the first live remote radio broadcast from the Pleasant Hill Fair. Radio station KITE, Kansas City, broadcast the school band performing a 30-minute program with ads for events going on at the fair.

The Street Fairs continued throughout the 1940s. In the 50s and 60s festivals with carnivals and parades replaced the fair.

In 1968 or 1969 the West Central District came to Pleasant Hill and ran until 1978.

Rebirth of a Fair

After a long dry fair spell, in 1994, the Cass County Fair was formed by the City of Pleasant Hill. The old sawmill site on Big Creek west of town on Highway 58 was purchased for the bargain price of \$10,000.

Hundreds of volunteers have donated thousands of man hours (and woman hours) of labor to build Pleasant Hill’s third fairgrounds and do “whatever is necessary” to see that each year’s fair is a great success. The Cass County Fair has grown to be the largest “new fair” in Missouri.

Come join us as we make some more history, memories and celebrate the 31st year of the Cass County Fair.

SMALL TOWN AMERICA



Raising the Flag (photo/Vickie Hall)



(photo/Nick Bordner)



(photo/Brayden Talley)

Cass County Fair Parade

Christmas came a little early to Pleasant Hill this year as the Cass County Fair Parade rolled through town with a “Christmas in July” theme.



Float in the Parade - Community Bank (photo/Jolene Backes)



(photo/Sebastian Wentz)

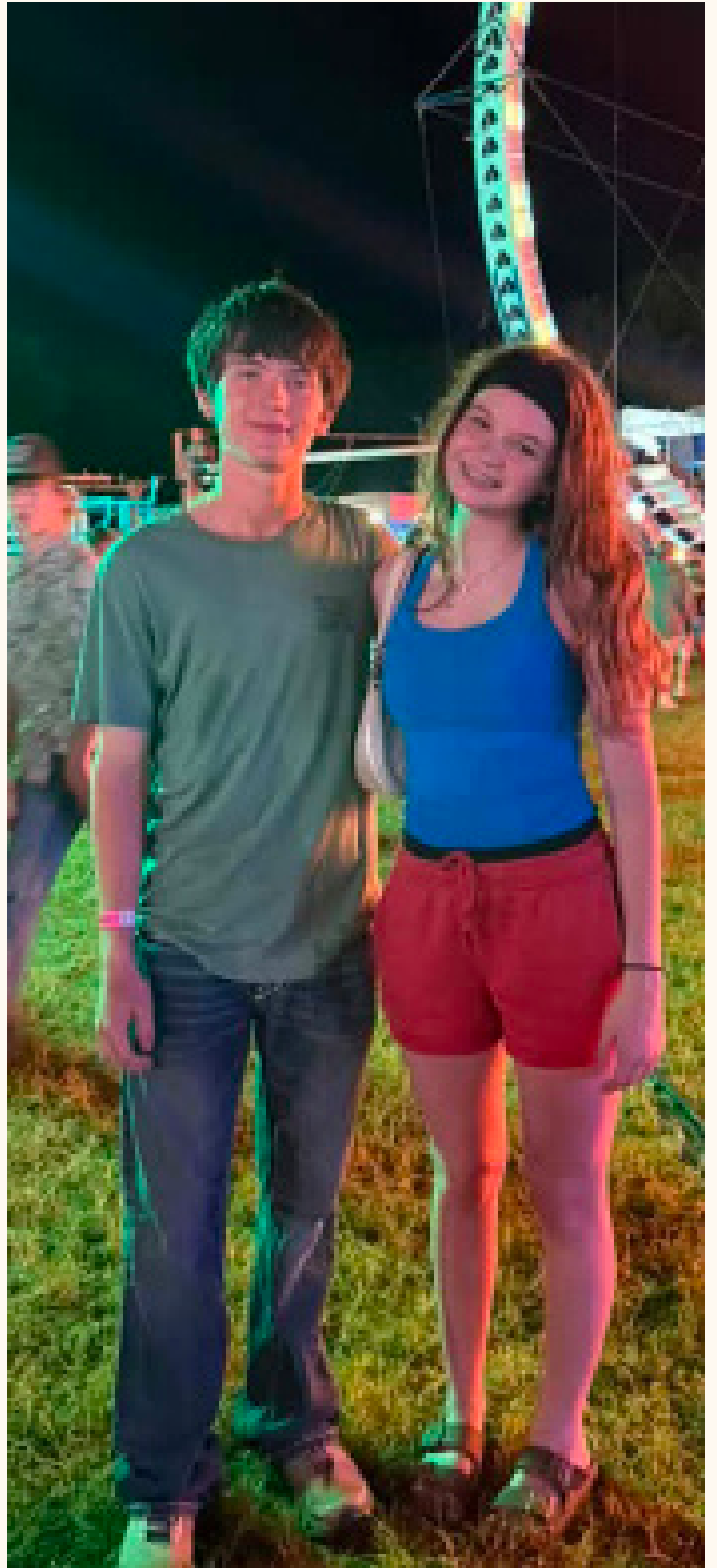


(photo/Brittany Dilorio)

Date Night AT THE FAIR



Andra and Kody (photo/Alisha Elizabeth)



*Nephew asked a girl to the Fair
(photo/Mikayla Laughlin)*

The fair isn't just for kids. From twinkling lights to spinning rides and sweet treats, there's no better place for a little date night adventure.



Carody and Adam (photo/Alisha Elizabeth)



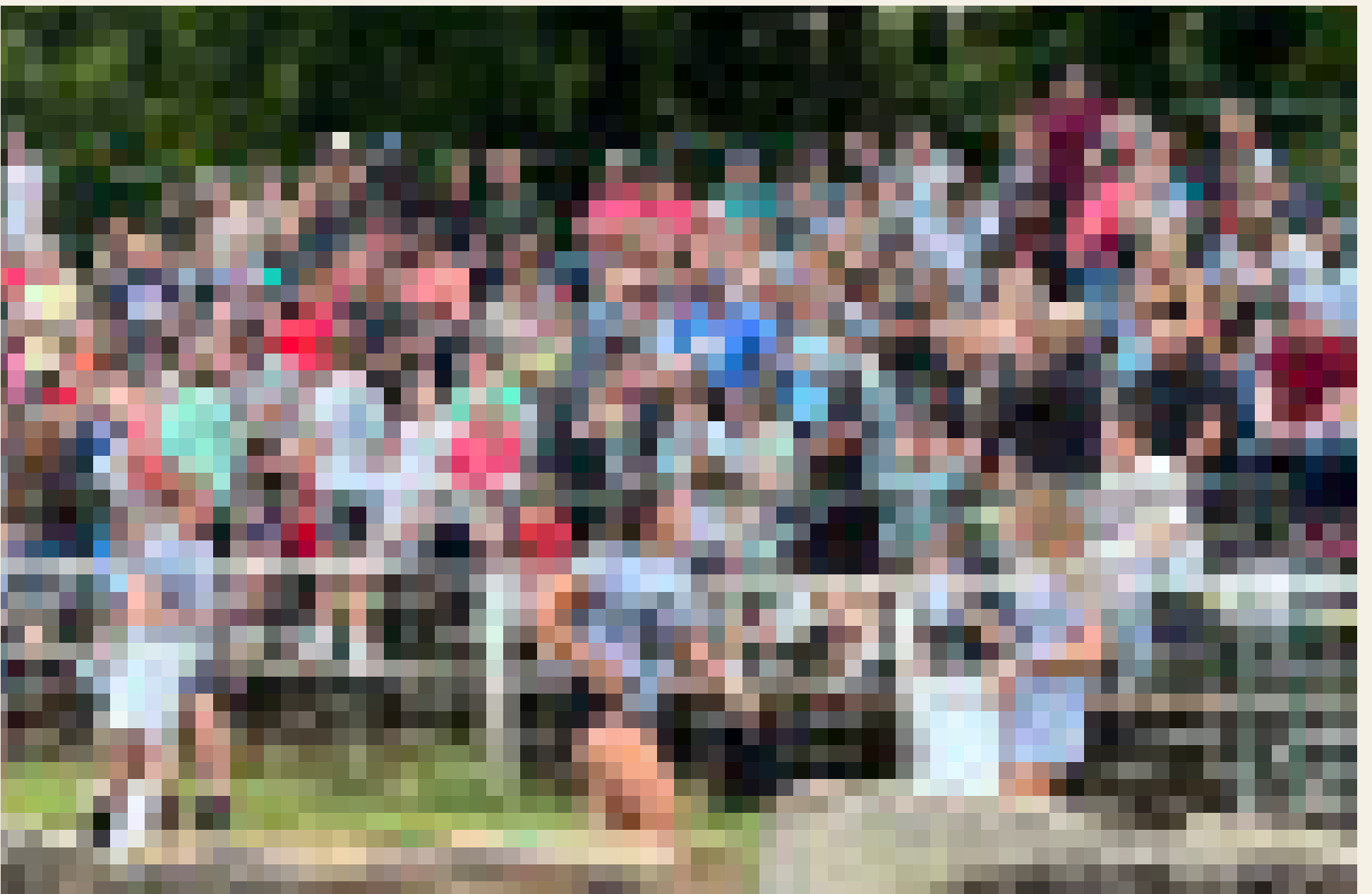
Laney and Carson and some cotton candy (photo/Sophia Shipp)



Christina and Nathan (photo/Alisha Elizabeth)

DEMOLITION DERBY

**The noise, the mud and the crowd --
demolition derby night at the Cass County Fair.**



Derby Crowd (photo/Connie Whitlock)



(photo/Connie Whitlock)



Kynslee watching the demolition Derby and the tractor race (photo/Melissa Wellington)



J.W. Hanes and Aaron Wildhelm
(photoConnie Whitlock)



Clown (photo/Amber Ross)



Royalty - Queen: Angel Day Duchess: Leni Betts
(photo/Connie Whitlock)



Rick Kuenzler 98.1FM (photo/Connie Whitlock)



Tony Bakken Public Works working the Derby
(photo/Connie Whitlock)

WHERE
STEEL
MEETS
MUD



*Mayor Don Donovan out of the Derby
(photo/Connie Whitlock)*



(photo/Connie Whitlock)



(photo/Connie Whitlock)



(photo/Connie Whitlock)

FULL POWER. NO HOLDING BACK.

CASS COUNTY FAIR DEMOLITION DERBY



The domolition goliath (photo/Travis Crain)



(photo/Connie Whitlock)

FAIR FUN

MEMORIES MADE AT THE CASS COUNTY FAIR!



A kid and his dad at the atv race the kiddo won 1st place in his class
(photo/Kaylee Rhodelander)



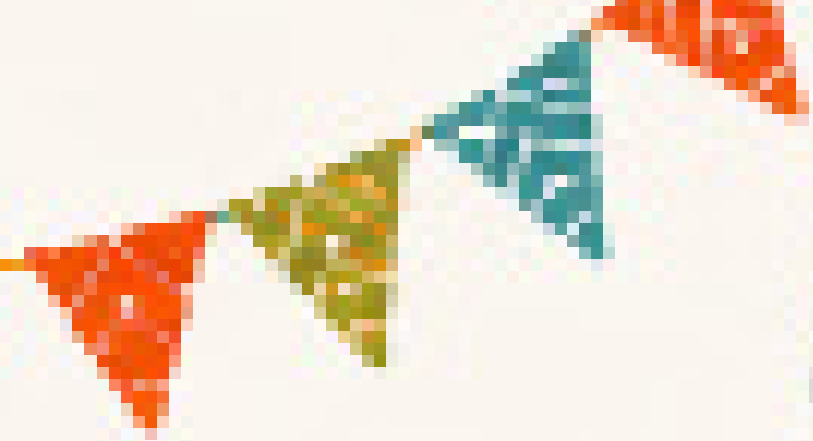
Thanks to the Optimist Club for the bike rodeo and a new bike!!! (photo/Susan Hall Manda)



The boys found their good friend after the parade while walking around the vendors. (photo/Tiffany Gilmore)

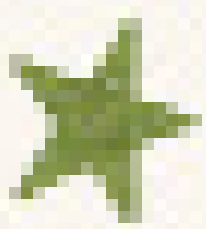


Big sis won this for him at the Bike Rodeo! (photo/Jonathan Nicholas)



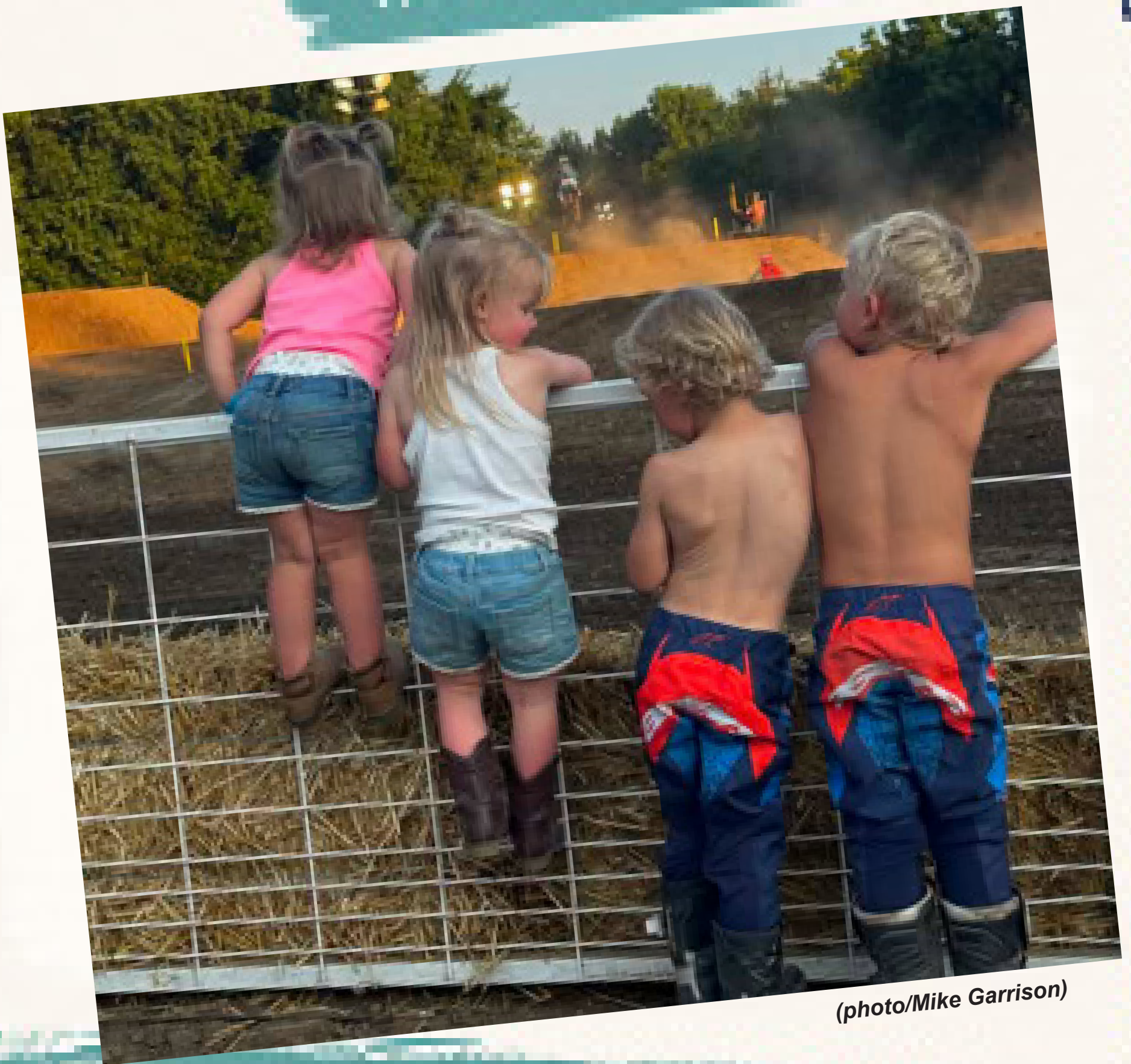
little

FAIR



moments

THAT LAST FOREVER



(photo/Mike Garrison)



(photo/Casondra Louise Wittenborn)



(Staying cool (photo/Kim Roller)



Braxton 7 y/o - I had to sneak a nap in before events when mom thinks we have to be there at 5 EVERY-DAY. I don't even sit during the events I play in the mud and look at rocks. And yes she even made me go when it was RAINING.... But that's okay it made more mud for me to play in (photo/Kinzi Ash Braxton)



Just got dirty mutton busting!! Maverick and Preston Tschudi (photo/Alyse Wiedenmann)

CASS COUNTY FAIR RODEO



Cass County Fair Horse Show (photo/Christy Hall)



Having fun at the rodeo (photo/Carmen Thompson)



(photo/Dallas Chatham)



Emma Mutton Bustin - Emma's getting ready to bust some mutton. (photo/Justin Moore)



She lost an earring and busted a button off her dress but she had the best time in the mutton busting on Friday night. (photo/Megan Forbes)



(photo/Mickey O'fallon)

CASS COUNTY FAIR

CARNIVAL



(photo/J D Schiller)



(photo/Thomas Lindley)



Me and my bf spence with the ferris wheel
(photo/ a mom walking by)



*Two girls living their best life
(photo/Justine Sorensen)*



(photo/Addyson Williams)



*My granddaughter Avie. First Cass County Fair -
Missouri (photo/Vicky Kyle)*



(photo/Tara Black)



(photo/Robin Worthington)



(photo/Monica Rosenstengle)



Every year my boy, James, still lets me ride with him, I make sure to get a picture! One day my one and only will be too old to hang out with mom. We love the scrambler! (photo/Hillary Jo)



(photo/Thomas Lindly)



(photo/Thomas Lindly)



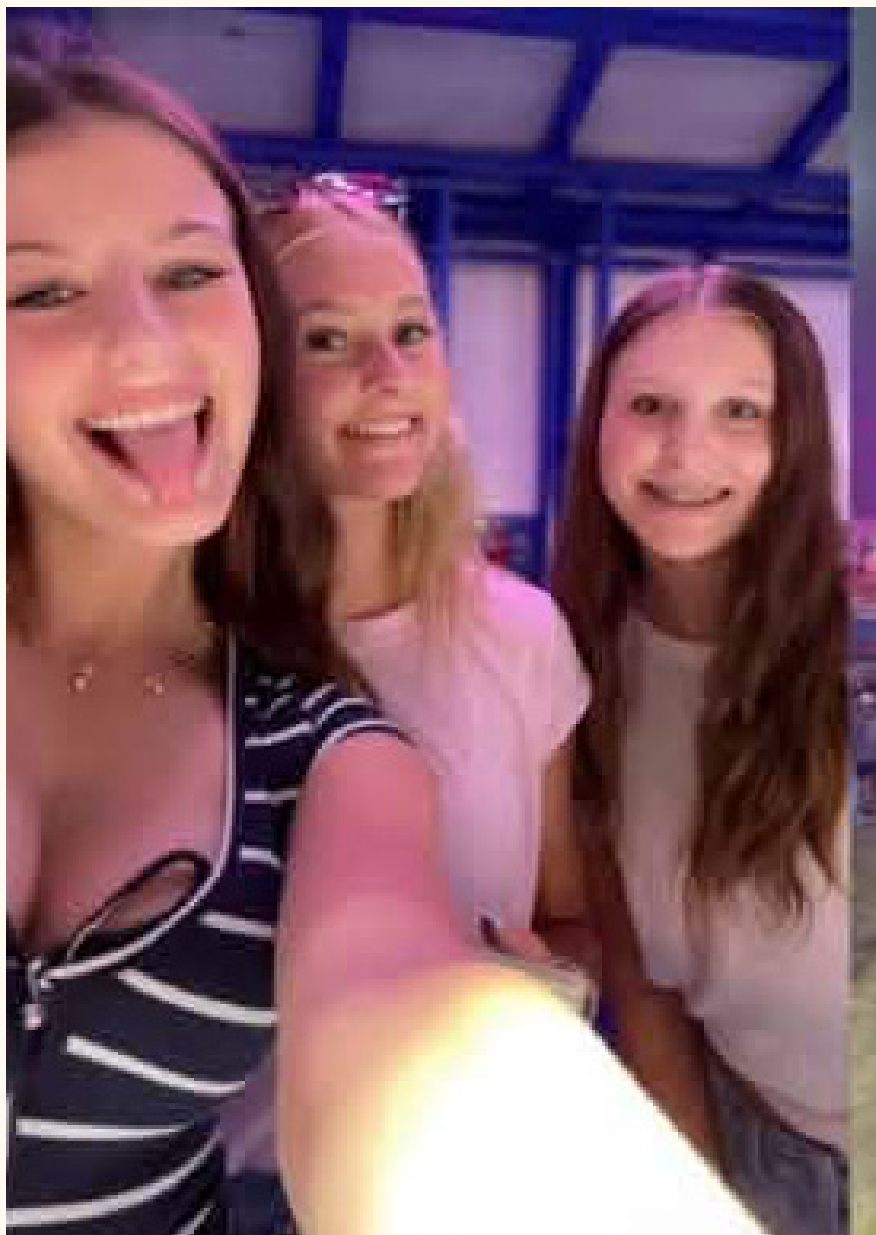
Kaylie Fischer took this picture of her nephew Cole as soon as he spotted her from across the fair! He was very excited to find his aunt and cousins (photo/Kaylie Fischer)



(photo/Jenny Perkins)



Sunset over the final night of the carnival (photo/Samantha Rohleder)



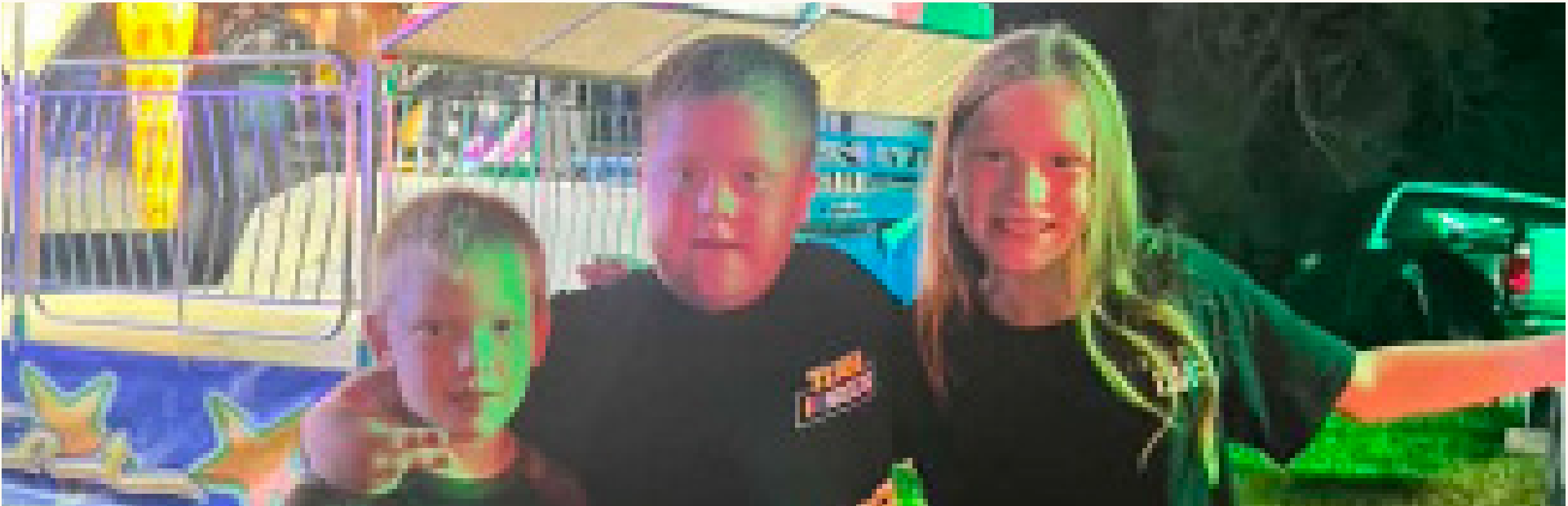
(photo/Alex Moretine)



Charlee and Kinzley - about to ride the Zero Gravity ride for the 867th time! (photo/Brianna King)



***pictured: Arissa, MacKinley, Cailin, and Jaxon getting ready for the carnival ride!
(photo/Mackinley Carpenter)***



Madi, Grayson, and Colton being brave and taking on the big kid rides! (photo/Kelsey Jo Collene)



(photo/Lilyan Tindle)



(photo/Caleb Hays)



(photo/Scarlet Young)



(photo/Sam Courtney)



(photo/Madalyne Richardson)



I feel like this was the perfect view (photo/Aubree Searcy)



Top of the ferris wheel by myself (photo/Brian Martin)



(photo/Caleb Hays)



(photo/Ashley Adams)



(photo/Zach Patterson)

Derby clown striking a pose picture taken by Amber Ross
(photo/Amber Ross



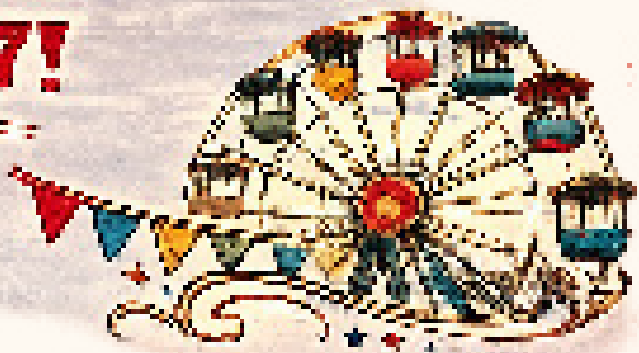


Potty Break with a View - (photo/Kelsey Jo Collene)

★ UNTIL ★
NEXT YEAR...

*Thanks for the rides,
the dirt, the laughs—
—and the memories.*

SEE YOU IN 2027!



Capturing the Fair Through Your Eyes

The 2026 Cass County Fair Photo Contest was hosted on the PHMOmag Facebook page, inviting fairgoers to share the moments that captured their Cass County Fair experience. The community then joined in the fun, voting for their favorites with “like” and “love” reactions.

This year’s winning photograph, featured on the cover of this issue, is “**Big Dreams in a Small Town**” by **Laila Mannino**, a senior at Pleasant Hill High School.

Thank you to everyone who shared a photo, cast a vote and helped us celebrate the people, traditions and moments that make the Cass County Fair special.

The winning photograph was printed and framed and presented to the City of Pleasant Hill as a gift from PHMOmag. The photograph commemorates the 2026 Cass County Fair and recognizes the hard work of the staff and volunteers who made it possible, along with everyone who attended, participated and helped make the fair a community tradition.



Connie Whitlock and Mayor Don Donovan

ABOUT PHMOmag

PHMOmag is a nonprofit community publication dedicated to telling the stories of Pleasant Hill and the people who call it home. Through local journalism, photography, community information and storytelling, our goal is to document our community while helping neighbors stay informed and connected.

PUBLISHER & EDITOR
Connie Whitlock

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Christy Snow
Mary Tanck

PHOTOGRAPHY
PHMOmag and Contributors

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