165th Auglaize County Fair

JULY 30TH – AUGUST 5TH
Family fun for all!

Thursday
FREE GRANDSTAND
DEMOLITION DERBY

NEW THIS YEAR
WARRIOR OBSTACLE COURSE

ALL WEEK LONG
HORSE AND LIVESTOCK SHOWS
LOTS OF RIDES AND ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

AUGLAIZE COUNTY
Piehl marks last fair as manager

BY DAVE VORHEES

For the last 25 years, the Auglaize County Fairgrounds has changed — it has expanded, added buildings and created memorable events for families throughout Auglaize County — but one thing has remained the same; there was one constant guiding light, and that is Fred Piehl.

Piehl became the manager of the fairgrounds in 1992. As Piehl explained it, he was already the president of the fair board when then-manager Jim Dearbaugh became ill. Because Piehl was an integral part of the fair process, the board asked him to step up and run the fair. After the fair, Dearbaugh decided to move on after 10 years and asked Piehl to take over. After a few board members also asked Piehl to take over, he accepted the position.

“It’s one of those part-time jobs that started 25 years ago,” Piehl said. “We still classify it as a part-time job, but it’s a full-time job.”

Piehl said he was only planning to do the job for five years, but one project lead to another and 25 years later, Piehl says he is ready to step aside and let someone else have their turn.

In the last 25 years, Piehl has seen the fair at its best and at its worse. Piehl noted the year it rained for all but one day of the fair. Attendance was cut in half that year, and it made it difficult for the fairgrounds to stay running, Piehl said.

“We made it through,” Piehl said, “and luckily we had a lot of people that worked with us. The next couple of years we had it good again, so it came right back.”

When the fair celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2002, Budwieser brought in the Clydesdales, the weather was nice and when people had learned it was the anniversary, the fair had an incredible turnout, Piehl said.

The memory that stands out to Piehl the most was when St. Marys company Setex planned on having its company picnic on the fairgrounds during the fair.

“We put a large 60 by 100-some foot tent out there by 33,” Piehl said. “We catered it, and we had it ready the night before.”

That night, there were heavy winds, and it was only getting windier as the night went on, Piehl said. The wind had completely blown the tent down around 2 a.m. The company was very understanding, and even though the day was rainy, the picnic went on at the grandstands.

In Piehl’s time, the fairground has built and improved numerous buildings and just recently built new a show arena and expanded the camping area. There always seems to be another project to see through, he said.

Piehl called the yearly fair the biggest picnic in the county and said he worries about it all the time.

“They ask why I get so worried about it for, everybody helps out,” Piehl said. “I say, ‘Well, do you ever get nervous when you invite people over to the house? Say if you have 20 people come to your..."
Caretaker reflects on years of service

BY ANGIE KLOSTERMAN

Gary Leppla, who started as the caretaker of the Auglaize County Fairgrounds in spring 1980, is hanging up his boots this year.

Leppla has lived in Wapakoneta since 1960, only leaving to spend two years out west. When he returned in 1979, he was looking for a job and spent some time on welfare, through which he worked for the city to pay back some of his benefits. Then, while working on the CEDA program, he was offered the job as caretaker of the fairgrounds.

“I was on the CEDA program at the time when I get hired in here,” Leppla said. “Al Bishop came up to me and asked if I wanted a job. I said, ‘Sure.’”

He has been caretaker since then. When Leppla was hired in 1980, the caretaker was a paid position with the fair board, and it switched to being paid from the county commissioners’ payroll in 1983. It has been paid from that fund ever since.

“I don’t know if I’m the longest caretaker that’s been here,” Leppla said. “But I don’t remember if there’s anybody who’s been here that long.”

Leppla said Bishop gave him a ring of keys — not quite as many as his current collection.

“He gave me some keys and said, ‘Here, you take over. We’re going to hire you,’” Leppla said, adding he also took care of rentals when he started. “(I’m responsible for) plumbing and stuff, making sure the toilets are cleaned. When one gets plugged up, you go in there and clean it out. Not too many people like doing that. (Also) to make sure people know where things are, like shutoffs for the water.”

As caretaker, Leppla is responsible for general maintenance of the fairgrounds.

“To make sure the grounds are ready for different events and stuff, to make sure they’re taken care of, to clean up afterwards,” he said. “If I have to clean the grounds, mow, weed eat, paint, general maintenance. You have to be an electrician and a plumber. I didn’t know anything about that when I got in here. You learn quick.”

He learned by asking questions.

“I asked how to do this and how to do that,” he said. “A lot of people have helped me. George Baker, he helped me out a lot telling me different things and how it went.”

Leppla said he has enjoyed his tenure as caretaker, but most of all, it’s been the people.

“I’ve had a hell of a good time out here,” he said. “I’ve met a lot of people, met a lot of kids through the ATPA summer youth program. There were a lot of kids that never had a job before and it was their first job out here. I made it so they would learn something before they left, even if it wasn’t much, they at least learned something.”

He said they also had trustees from the jail for Outstanding Dedication as a Groundskeeper from the Greater Ohio Showman’s Association that hangs on the wall in the caretaker’s office — an office, he said, that hasn’t changed since he started except for leftover unclaimed items he’s picked up from sales at the grounds.

“There was a storm here in July, around July 4, and we had everything cleaned up,” he said of when he received the award. “There were still some big logs and stuff sitting here, but a lot of people through that; St. Joe; during fair, the ride company. Even like small events and stuff. If you don’t talk to people, you won’t know anything.”

He fondly reflected on winning an award for Best Truck in Auglaize County.

“I used a fairgrounds truck, and it was an old white Chevy; it had a door missing, it was great,” he said. “I just drove it in front of the grandstands. The other boys had these real nice trucks. I really liked that.”

He also reflected on the changes he’s seen during the years he’s worked as caretaker — such as seeing new additions and the removal of old buildings. He also noted the award he received for Outstanding Dedication as a Groundskeeper from the Greater Ohio Showman’s Association that hangs on the wall in the caretaker’s office — an office, he said, that hasn’t changed since he started except for leftover unclaimed items he’s picked up from sales at the grounds.

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After recovery, Leppla said he plans on being any time between now and September. He is waiting for a liver transplant, which could be caused by cirrhosis of the liver, Hepatitis and cancer. He appreciates his health — he was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver.

“I would like to tell the people from Wapakoneta that we have a nice fair,” he said. “I appreciate everything that they’ve done for the fair. I appreciate the county commissioners. I really want to appreciate my wife … Just a thank you to all the people throughout Auglaize County.”

— Update: Leppla received the call from OSU the day after this interview to let him know he had a new liver. He had a successful transplant and wanted to add he’s still working at the fairgrounds and “taking his time.”

Looking for a job to keep busy. Now, when he does have free time, Leppla said he “tinkers with stuff” or he’ll take drives to Grand Lake St. Marys or to Indian Lake. He would also like to start fishing. Once he gets the call for his liver transplant, he has four hours to get to Ohio State, so he doesn’t travel too far. Usually he’ll only travel to visit his children and grandchildren, some of whom live out of town. He has seven total children, with two of them being stepchildren.

Leppla also noted he wanted to make sure to thank all of the people in Auglaize County for their support over the years.

“Just a thank you to all the people throughout Auglaize County.”

What’s new at the fair for ‘17

The Auglaize County Fair returns with many games, rides and food along with concerts, livestock shows and races to entertain the masses.

Many of the events are returning favorites, but for those looking for something new to try — perhaps a new challenge to meet and overcome, a new thrill or even a sight to behold — the Auglaize County Fair has something for everyone.

The Warrior Challenge Course

The warrior challenge course is a timed challenge made up of 12 different grueling obstacles designed to challenge even the strongest of wills. Contestants start out by challenging their abilities to stay vertical as they cross a zig-zagging balance beam. Then, they see if they have the fortitude to make it up and over the net climb. Once over the net, they face a series of over/under obstacles, followed by the ladder wall. At the wall, contestants climb up and then down. After, they crawl through a darkened tunnel. On the other side of the tunnel, they face a tire slalom: Contestants place one foot in each tire hoping to not trip. After successfully getting past the tires, contestants face the rope climb. They then recreate a military obstacle course favorite, the crawler, during which contestants crawl on their bellies under guidewires. After the crawl, they have to properly navigate the barrel run. If the contestants have survived so far, they head to the dive window. Once through the window, contestants face their greatest challenge, the concave wall. They will have to run up the wall, grab the edge and pull themselves upon the platform and ring the bell. The warrior challenge will be available individual contestants from 1-4 p.m. for $5 the entire week of the fair. Team competitions will be from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., and the price is $75 per a three-member team; the team with the best time nightly will win $150 to donate to their favorite charity. The course will be closed for maintenance from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The taller obstacles will have age-appropriate challenges; the timer will be stopped after the dive window, and contestants will have three chances to make it up the concave wall. If successful, they will deduct 15 seconds from the runner’s course time.

The Hammer Brothers Haunted Circus: Paintball shooting real zombies

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The fair will also be returning favorites such as harness racing and live music from area favorites Another Round, Nashville Crush and new to the area, the Naked Karate Girls Band with their unique blend of comedy, costume changes and music.

They will also have all the favorite fair rides, games and food. There will also be puppet shows from critically acclaimed Stevens Puppets and music from one-man band Marc Dobson. Super Heroes like Batman, Spiderman and Wonder Woman will be making an appearance to assist in keeping the fair safe from evil-doers.

### PRICING INFORMATION

**Fair Admittance**

- 9 and under are admitted free. General admission is $8. Week long season passes are $30. Pit passes are $15.

**Rides**

- Wristbands are $15 for 1-5 p.m and $16 for 6-11 p.m. All day is $18. Kids Day on Tuesday and Saturday are $12 for noon - 5p.m and $16 for 6-11 p.m.; all day $18. Rides are closed from 5-6 p.m. daily for maintenance. Individual ride tickets are $1.25 or 20 for $20 (some rides may require more than one ticket).

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**2017 AUGLAIZE COUNTY FAIR SCHEDULE**

**Sunday, July 30**

- 9 a.m.: Open Horse Show
- 10 a.m.: Open Horticulture Show (Hort. Bldg.)
- 10 a.m.: Open Can Goods and Bake Goods Show (Hort. Bldg.)
- 10 a.m.: Booths available for setup in Commercial Bldg.
- Noon: Ribbon Cutting (Front Gate)
- Noon: District Holstein Cattle should be in place
- 12:30 p.m.: Open Horseshoe Pitch Tournament - Class B Tourn.
- 1-4 p.m.: Children Choosing Christ - The True Treasure (Gospel Tent)
- 1-4 p.m.: Super Heroes (Strolling Grounds)
- 2 p.m.: Open Beef Breeding Show, followed by live part Junior Fair Beef Carcass Show, followed by Open Steer & Feeder Calf Show; Cattlemen’s Born & Raised Steer Show (Pielh Arena)
- 2 p.m.: Open Class Barrow & Gilt Show in Show Arena
- 5 p.m.: First Place and Best of Show Cake Auction (Entertainment Tent)
- 6 p.m.: Nashville Crush (Entertainment Tent)
- 6 p.m.: Truck -vs- Truck (Free Grandstands)
- 7:30 p.m.: Legacy Five (Gospel Tent)

**Monday, July 31: MENS DAY**

- 10 a.m.-noon: Craft Demo (Fine Arts Bldg.)
- Noon: Registration for Auglaize County Pork Producers Adult & Pee Weigh-in
- Noon - 8 p.m.: Booths available for setup (Exhibit Bldg.)
- Noon: Rabbit Weigh-in
- 1 p.m.: 4-H Style Review (Junior Fair Bldg.)
- 2 p.m.: Open Class Beef Breeding Show (Pielh Arena) followed by Live Part of Junior Fair Beef Carcass followed by Open Steer and Feeder Show; Cattlemen’s Born & Raised Steer Show

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**New acts in Gospel Tent**

**By Laura Koenig**

This year, the Auglaize County Fair Gospel Tent will host a few new musicians while bringing back some of the favorites.

Newcomers to the fair, The Collingsworth Family, will perform at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 2; according to Gospel Tent Chairman Tom Knoch, they’ve had multiple requests for this group.

Phil and Kim Collingsworth had their first engagement in 1986 at a Michigan church camp. Since then, their music has grown into a full-time ministry that includes their four children and has taken them around the country and the world.

Brian Free, in Brian Free & Assurance, is returning to the fair and is one of the most recognizable southern Gospel tenors. He, along with Bill Shivers and Mike Rogers, will be at the fair at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 3.

The Ball Brothers — made up of brothers Andrew and Daniel Ball, their brother-in-law Chad McCloskey and newcomer Matt Davis — are not a typical Gospel quartet. They have learned how to embrace their uniqueness and reach out to people of all ages with their hand-picked songs to spread the message of the Gospel and encourage believers. They will be at the fair at 7:30 p.m. July 31.

GRAMMY® and GMA DOVE Award-winning recording artist Guy Penrod breathes life into new renditions of classic and contemporary worship songs like “Shout to the Lord,” “Revelation Song,”...
1-3 p.m.: Craft Demo (Fine Arts Bldg.)
1-4 p.m.: Children Choosing Christ - The True Treasure (Gospel Tent)
2-6 p.m.: Fine Arts Premiums paid out (Fine Arts Bldg.)
6:30 p.m.: Horseshoe Pitch Class B Team Tournament
6:30 p.m.: Harness Racing, MOON WALK PACE (Free Grandstand)
7-11 p.m.: T-102 Country Star Playoff Final (Entertainment Tent)
7 p.m.: Floral Show (Hort. Bldg.)
7 p.m.: Tim Kuenning and son wood carving
7 p.m.: Baking Contest (Hort. Bldg.)
7 p.m.: Jr. Baking Contest (Entertainment Tent)
7 p.m.: Homemade Wine & Beer Judging (Hort. Bldg.)
7:30 p.m.: Collingsworth Family (Gospel Tent)

Junior Fair
9 a.m.: Junior Fair Market Hog Show (Swine Arena)
10 a.m.: Junior Fair Board Meeting (Junior Fair Office)
2 p.m.: Junior Fair Beef Breeding and Feeder Calf Show (Piehl Arena) followed by Junior Fair Beef Showmanship
6:30 p.m.: Junior Fair Horse Contesting Show (Horse Arena)
7 p.m.: Junior Fair Dairy and Market Steer Shows (Show Arena)
*Carcass Contest results will be announced during the steer show.

Thursday, Aug. 3: VETERAN'S DAY / DEMOLITION DERBY
Senior Fair
10 a.m.-noon: Craft Demo (Fine Arts Bldg.)
9 a.m.: Auglaize County Born & Raised Barrow/Gilt Show (Piehl Arena) followed by Junior Fair Beef Showmanship
6:30 p.m.: Junior Fair Horse Contesting Show (Horse Arena)
7 p.m.: Junior Fair Dairy and Market Steer Shows (Show Arena)

Tuesday, Aug. 1: SENIOR CITIZEN'S / KID'S DAY
Senior Fair
10 a.m.-noon: Craft Demo (Fine Arts Bldg.)
Noon-4 p.m.: Get Active at the Fair
Noon-dusk: New Bremen Historical Society Displays and Demonstrations (Log Cabin)

Wednesday, Aug. 2: LADIES DAY
Senior Fair
10 a.m.-noon: Craft Demo (Fine Arts Bldg.)
Noon-dusk: New Bremen Historical Society Displays and Demonstrations (Log Cabin)
Friday, Aug. 4

Senior Fair
10 a.m.-noon: Craft Demo (Fine Arts Bldg., Market Broiler and Market Turkey Show (Pielh Arena East))
3-4 p.m.: Youth Sheep & Goat Shows (Pielh Arena)
5 p.m.: FFA Social (FFA Bldg.)
6 p.m.: 4-H Cloverbud Presentations (Junior Fair Bldg.)
7 p.m.: Showmanship Sweepstakes (Pielh Arena)

Junior Fair
8:30 a.m.: Poultry Showmanship, Market Broiler and Market Turkey Show (Pielh Arena East)
9 a.m.: Junior Fair Goat Showmanship & Dairy, Pygmy Goat Show (Pielh Arena West)
Noon: Junior Fair Board Meeting (Junior Fair Office)
5 p.m.: FFA Social (FFA Bldg.)
6 p.m.: 4-H Cloverbud Presentations (Junior Fair Bldg.)
7 p.m.: Showmanship Sweepstakes (Pielh Arena)

Saturday, Aug. 5

KIDS DAY Sponsored by Lima Memorial Health System - Senior Fair
11 a.m.: Auglaize County Fair Speed Show in Horse Arena
Noon-dusk: Uniopolis & Buckland Historical Society Displays and Demonstrations (Log Cabin)
12:30-1:30 p.m.: Stevens Puppets: Rumpelstiltskin (under the grandstand)
Noon - 5 p.m.: Mike Hemmelgarn, comedy Juggler, Ventriloquist (Strolling Grounds)
1 p.m.: Corn Hole Tournament (Horseshoe Pit)
2-3 p.m.: Mike Hemmelgarn, comedy Juggler, Ventriloquist (under the grandstand)
3-4 p.m.: Stevens Puppets: Rumpelstiltskin (under the grandstand)
3-7 p.m.: Karma’s Pawn (Entertainment Tent)
4-5 p.m.: Mike Hemmelgarn, comedy Juggler, Ventriloquist (under the grandstand)
4 p.m.: Woodcarver Auction (Free Grandstand)
5 p.m.: Guy Penrod (Gospel Tent)
6 p.m.: Baggo Tournament in Horseshoe Pit
6 p.m.: Moon City Nationals NTPA Grand National Tractor Pull (Free Grandstand)
8-11:30 p.m.: Earthquakers (Entertainment Tent)

Junior Fair
9 a.m.: 4-H Dog Show (Junior Fair Bldg.)
9 a.m.: Junior Fair Livestock Sale (Hog Arena) – Hogs, Sheep
Noon: Junior Fair Board Meeting (Junior Fair Office)
7 p.m.: Best Dressed Animal and Animal Calling Contest (Pielh Arena)
11 p.m.-midnight: Rabbit and Poultry projects* are released
Midnight: Junior Fair Projects Released

Sunday, Aug. 6

Senior Fair
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.: Booth tear down in Exhibit and Commercial Buildings
9 a.m.-noon: Fine Arts Exhibits released

Junior Fair
8-2 p.m.: Booths and FFA Shop and Crop exhibits available for tear down (FFA & Exhibit Bldg.s)
8-2 p.m.: Rabbits and Poultry exhibits available for removal (Rabbit & Poultry Barns)
2 p.m.: All Junior Fair Projects Must Be Removed
Come See What’s New at the 2017 Auglaize County Fair July 30th-August 5th

Don’t miss the return of Truck-vs-Truck and Barnyard Express

Sunday, July 30th
Monday, July 31st
Tuesday, August 1st

a 7 foot T-REX will be roaming the midway interacting and wowing the crowds. Don’t miss your opportunity to get a picture.

Miniature Draft Horse Pulls in the Horse Show Arena

Thursday, August 3rd
7pm-9pm

For a complete schedule visit our website auglaizecountyfair.org