Guilford Fair at 154: A Bounty of fun, a celebration of the local farm

By Lisa Reisman lisareisman27@gmail.com

GUILFORD - When, in 1859, four farmers founded the Guilford Fair, no Flying Wallendas performed acrobatic feats 150 feet above ground on a wire suspended from two cranes. There was no petting zoo with llamas, toucans, and emus.

Nor, it's safe to say, did a Steven Tyler imitator strut across a stage as part of Draw the Line, an Aerosmith Tribute Band scheduled as the main act this Friday night.

That's because 1859 was a time when farmers measured themselves by what they had produced through their own hard work. Which explains the inaugural fair's objective: to exhibit to the rest of the town the fruits of their labors, including "agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, and the household arts."

Take away the star-studded acts and the exotic animals, though, and that's pretty much in keeping with the aim of this year's Guilford Fair, which runs from this Friday to Sunday and why Pinchbeck Rose Farm—now operating as Roses for Autism—founded in 1927 and Guilford's oldest greenhouse, graces the cover of the 2013 Exhibitors' Guide.

"I especially want to recognize our local farmers," Guilford Agricultural Society president John Hammarlund said in a press release. "In spite of severe weather conditions, local farmers have pulled up their boot-

See GUILFORD FAIR, Page 5



Submitted photo

The Guilford Fair is about recognizing local farmers and talent with its many old fashioned competitions and displays.

Guilford Fair: Takes place this weekend

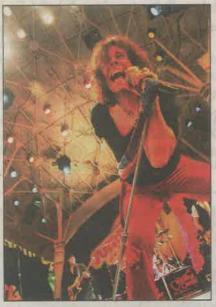
From page 1

straps and have toiled to do whatever they needed to do to keep their farms going."

It's also a symbol of the astonishing longevity — and continuity - of the fair. Sure, the festivities moved from the Guilford Green to the 30-acre Hunter Farm off Lover's Lane in 1969, but as on the third weekend of every September, the air will still sing with bleats, squeals, and shouts. Yes, the fairgrounds may no longer be trafficked with strings of parading cattle, with local farmers vving to send the largest possible

Still, the Guilford Fair remains, in the words of Larry Kalbfeld, owner of Guilford's Photo in a Flash and longtime cochair of the photo committee, "a showcase of all the local talent around here, whether you grow flowers or take pictures or can paint a picture. It's about inspiring people

delegation of their stock.



A Steve Tyler lookalike will perform Friday night. Submitted photo.

to harvest their creativity and come up with an entry."

In a larger sense, it's also about the cultivation of a sort of collective independent spirit—one that year after year pulls off the three-day affair with a hardy corps of volunteers and a bare

minimum
of corporate
sponsors—that
goes to the
essence of
the fair and,
indeed, to
the agrarian
heritage it celebrates.

More than that, at a time when people are further and further removed from the family farms of its past, the fair reinforces its significance.

Which is, beyond high-wire acts and the camel rides,

the games and the rides, the real treasure of the Guilford Fair: the chance to slow down and hearken back to a simpler, richer time.

One gate admission for \$10 (adults) covers all shows, displays and exhibits inside. Rides and



There are rides that tilt, whirl and thrill you at the Guilford Fair, in addition to all the agricultural displays, children's zoo and entertainment. Submitted photos.

refreshments are extra. Senior Citizens- \$8, children 6-11 \$5, children 5 and younger, free; three day discount pass- \$25; parking on site – \$5. Free parking with shuttle service at exit 57.

Guilford Fair at the Guilford Fairgrounds,

Lovers Lane.
Sept. 20 to Sept
22. Friday., 1-11
p.m.; Saturday,
9 a.m.-11 p.m.;
Sunday., 9 a.m.-7
p.m. Visit their
website: www.
guilfordfair.org.

