

GUILFORD FAIR AT 154: A BOUNTY OF FUN, A CELEBRATION OF THE LOCAL FARM

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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-



Submitted photo

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

Guilford Fair: Takes place this weekend

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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 vying to send the largest possible delegation of their stock.

Still, the Guilford Fair remains, in the words of Larry Kalbfeld, owner of Guilford's Photo in a Flash and longtime co-chair 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



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 hear-ken 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.

