

Missing our Highland County Fair friends

The Highland County Fair is successful today because many in the past were hands-on to make the fair the event we still love. With sadness, but fond

memories, we said good-bye to a few friends since the last fair that made noticeable contributions to this event. It's devastating to lose these friends with so

much enthusiasm and dedication to the success of the Highland County Fair. We are honored to recognize them in this small way for their work behind the scenes.



Clarence Joseph 'Joe' Brock

Highland County lost one of its hardest-working and most dedicated citizens when Joe passed from this earth in March.

He and his wife Phyllis came home to Highland full-time when Joe retired in 1991 ... retired from his official paying job, that is. He spent the rest of his life giving back to the community through his club and his church. Joe could fix and build almost anything. He was a great cook, specializing in the mix of herbs and spices for beef at the Mill Gap Earth Roast and the best barbeque in the county.

He served on the Fair Association board for many years, representing the Mill Gap Club.

As long as he was able, he worked set-up and take-down for the fair, part of the team that gathers early on Saturday morning of fair week to set up and early on Sunday after to carefully put everything away again.



Austin L. Shepherd

Austin was known for his wit, devotion to young people in agriculture and willingness to work for the fair.

In the '80's as he was finishing his career as Highland's county agent, he and Leslie Moyers would clean out the vegetable barn — a three-day process that ended with the fire department coming by to wash the building down. He would often recruit FFA boys to help with set up — especially if they could get out of school.

He always supported the 4-H/FFA livestock sale. After he retired he would participate as a buyer for several civic clubs, often challenging others to bid up the price for the young participants.

The story goes that Austin coined the phrase, Virginia's Little Switzerland, a name Highland is known for nationally and internationally.



Beth C. Evans

Highland County lost a wonderful friend on Beth's passing last September. Her passion was supporting local youngsters at the livestock show, either buying livestock for her and husband Jeff or for their company Dancon. She worked with Mike Hilbert to support the local food pantry by purchasing livestock at the auction, paying to have it processed and donating it.

On Wednesday morning in the gym, when out-of-town judges and their local helpers showed up early, there were fresh doughnuts and coffee ... fuel for many an hour of work. It was a thoughtful and tasty gesture.

Beth was a Blue Grass Ruritan and devoted herself to the club, which naturally meant that she spent a lot of time working at the fair.



Visit the fair
online at

www.HighlandCountyFairVa.com

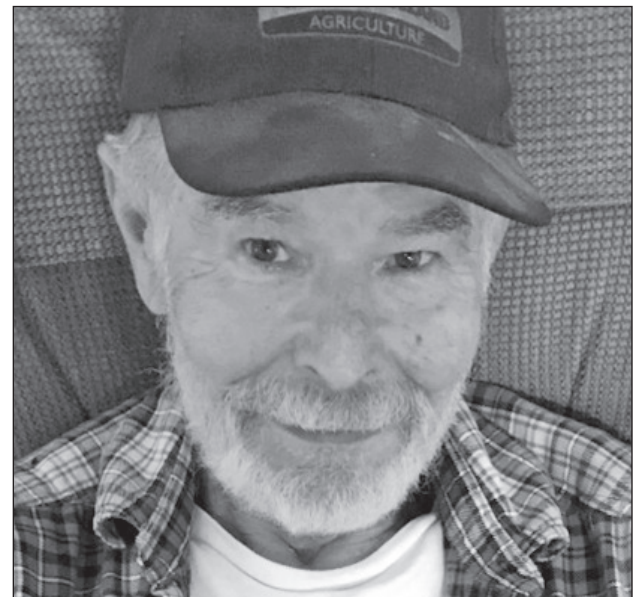



Sarah Ann Samples

Sarah was a respected member of the Monterey Garden Club and worked hard to make the Floriculture Exhibits at the fair as beautiful and professional as could be.

She moved to Highland from Mississippi and was tickled to find a fellow Southern-born teacher, Sarah Stephenson, on the faculty. She and Sarah were friends and serious gardeners with a passion for flowers and the desire to make the flower show a competitive Garden Club of America event.

Sarah was present at every fair until the pandemic struck. In addition to knowing her flowers, she was a wiz at math and stayed to tabulate piles of results so each entrant received his or her prize money.



F. Douglas Smith

Doug and his wife Caroline moved to Highland County in 1996. Upon arrival, they were invited to be members of the Mill Gap Ruritan club. Before he really knew what was happening, Doug became president of the club and representative on the fair association board. He was on the board for many years.

Doug is probably best known for his conservation efforts at the fair. He spent most late, late evenings picking up cardboard and discarded steel cans from behind the various booths. He often finished the night by going through trash cans in search of aluminum cans and plastic bottles. Much of the next day was spent cleaning ketchup off his treasurers and muttering about waste.