

Fair History Tidbits

1980 through 2026

1980

Stella Pardon performed along with The Vicksburgs. Mary Sweitzer noted that the show was fantastic.

The dog show was cancelled because of the canine parvo virus threat.

Fair was success despite rain and various competing events in the surrounding area. The fair dates were a week earlier due to the amusement company schedule.

The flower show was the best in recent years.

The Kiddie Show was held in the Highland High School gym with standing room only.

Officers included: Fred Frye-President, Bob Kelly-Vice President, Roy Waggoner Jr.-Secretary, and David Johnston-Treasurer. Elmer Helmick was general manager.

Season ticket prize drawings were awarded to Mamie Eagle, Melvin Echard, Karla Gutshall, and Virginia Sullenberger.

Tammy Powers and John Colaw were awarded the Little Miss and Master Highland honor.

The Highland Homemakers Extension Homemakers Club had the winning theme float using a "Hee Haw" theme.

Sixteen drivers participated in the Demolition Derby.

Grand Champion Market Lamb was raised and exhibited by Larry Armstrong of Doe Hill. The 115-pound lamb was purchased by First and Citizens Bank for \$1.90/lb.

George Beach of Bacova won a blue ribbon for his bantam pullets and Cockrel.

McDowell Volunteer Fire Department's raffle winners were Mille Case (22-250 rifle) and Larry Propst (color TV set).

1981

Jeanne Pruett opened the fair with a grandstand show. Her opening act included Kevin Mabry and Liberty Street.

Carnival rides were \$3.00 from 6-11 pm nightly.

The Dodd Family provided a gospel show.

The Horse Show was held on Saturday morning and an evening show at 7:30 PM.

Season tickets were sold at Ralston's Grocery, C&P Gulf, H&H Cash Store, Gutshall's Exxon, Ernie's Market and the Blue Grass Mercantile.

Crowned Little Miss and Master Highland were Marcella Townsend and John Hull at the 25th annual Kiddie Show.

Twenty-one entries qualified for the Demolition Derby.

Light rain on opening day.

The flower show coordinators were pleased to have 454 entries and distributed \$358.25 in prize money.

Eddie Moyers of Doe Hill exhibited the champion and reserve champion Registered Suffolk Ram.

The tractor pulling contest went well pass midnight with fierce competition.

1982

Roy Lee Waggoner, Jr. led a sheep fitting and showing demonstration. Many sheep were shorn at the fairgrounds.

The parade was held on Thursday prior to the grandstand show. Del Reeves was scheduled to be the headliner on Thursday night along with the Younger Brothers Band. However, Del Reeves became ill, so the Younger Brothers Band performed a double show. Attendees were encouraged to bring lawn chairs, jackets or blankets.

Fair dates were September 1-4 with a demolition derby as the opening feature by Stoney Roberts Derby. Twenty-five drivers provided thrills and excitement for the enthusiastic crowd. The Champion Derby winner was Charles Joseph of Dayton, 1969 Chevrolet Station Wagon with number "BR-549" and second place was awarded to Clinton Bowers of Sugar Grove in his 1969 Plymouth Fury.

Kimberlie Lowry and Aaron Blagg were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland. One-hundred children challenged the judges in the Kiddie Show.

The Blue Grass Ruritans served 1700 lbs. of hamburger.

Archery Competition Winners were: Bare Bow-Bob Ralston; Hunter (gloves)-Charles Waybright; Hunter (release)-Eugene Ratcliffe; Open-Charles Waybright; Junior-Greg Ratcliffe

Bill, a bear hound, owned by Jake Colaw of Blue Grass won the Dog Show Grand Champion Highland Residents Contest. Jack, a beagle, owned by J.M. Simmons took the Reserve Champion honor.

Lee Blagg had the best display of rye. Jeff Shumate had the longest stalk of corn. Sis Puffenbarger, Terri Puffenbarger, and Evelyn Jack took first, second, and third in the Powder Puff Asters class. The ball type Dahlia class winners were Doris Armstrong, Evelyn Jack, and Denita Beverage. The artistic flower arrangement class titled "Good Morning World" included winners Mary Hille McCoy, Mrs. C.B. Fox, Jr., and Elizabeth McCoy.

1983

Fair dates were August 31 through September 3.

Jeanne C. Riley was the featured country music entertainer.

Eugene Ratcliffe organized the archery contest

Daily fair admission was \$3 on Wednesday and Thursday; \$2 on Friday and Saturday. Children 6-14 were charged \$1. Season Tickets were \$7.50 for adults and \$3 for children.

Valley Bethel Believers and the Edenaires held a gospel show in the high school cafetorium.

Sarah Ashe & Danny Hull were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

1984

The 33rd "Highland County Fair was considered by new, old, and sometime residents as the biggest homecoming event in Highland County."

In late 1983, the Highland Young Farmers initiated the building of a portable stage to be used for entertainment. Prior year stages were rented. Roy Grant of McDowell took this project under his supervision with 20-30 volunteers helping. W.G. Ervine put the roof on.

Ride all night tickets were \$5 for the WV Amusements rides.

2,000 daily tickets were sold on a single night.

The Doe Hill Youth Fellowship sold lamb barbecue on Thursday during the sheep show.

Seybert Chapel United Methodist Church held a Homemade Pie Baking Contest and Auction on Friday to raise money for their building fund.

1985

Approximately 100 sheep, cattle, hogs, and rabbits were expected in the barns. No poultry due to the avian flu threat.

Extension Agent, Ardis Stephenson, showcased 4-H Demonstrations in the barn with 4-H members sharing knowledge from “Cat Care” to “Butter making.”

Piney Mountain Cloggers performed at the grandstands on Wednesday followed by the Stoney Roberts Demolition Derby at 8 PM. Razy Bailey performed a country music show on Thursday. On Friday, the Truck and tractor pulling contest was held. Saturday included a dog show, sheep dog demonstrations, horseshoe pitching contest, 4-H & FFA Livestock sale, a gospel show, and a horse show.

It was noted that the horse show had great participation and attendance despite the rain.

1986

Margo Smith entertained a large crowd.

The fair had rain over three days, which resulted in \$2,000 less in proceeds.

Mike McCray won grand champion for his market steer that weighed 1360 pounds. It was sold to First & Citizens Bank at \$0.81/lb. Shawna Bratton’s 1300-pound steer placed reserved champion. The Grand Champion market lamb was awarded to Randy Hunt. His lamb weighed 115 lbs. and received \$2.55/lb. from Highland Young Farmers. Dean Hunt exhibited the Reserve champion market lamb.

Brittany Whitelaw and Jimmy Hagan were awarded the Little Miss and Master Highland honor.

Pierre, owned by Lindy Nipper, shown by Pam Whitelaw, took the Dog Champion of Shows award.

1987

Little Miss and Master Highland winners were Jessica Simmons and Joshua Curry. 118 children registered for the Kiddie Show.

The winners of the 4500 lbs. non-turbo tractor class were Eddie Plecker, Millboro; Steve Botkin, Churchville; and Buzz Plecker, Millboro.

Mike Puffenbarger and Erwin Bussard received blue ribbons and best of show for their mounted deer heads.

The Highland 4-H float commemorated the bicentennial of the United State Constitution with a “We the People” parade float theme.

Porter Waggoner drew an overflowing crowd for his musical performance.

Canned Applesauce winners were Jessie Hiner, Lucille Ratcliffe, and Libby Nipper.

1988

“It always rains during the fair.” The statement held true, but only a few drops on Saturday night. It was estimated that 4,000 were in attendance on Friday night. Perhaps the largest-ever single night crowd. Riders ran until midnight due to the large crowd and participation.

Bill Anderson kicked off the fair under clear skies.

The sheep Costume Contest wasn’t publicized because it was a late decision but drew a huge crowd. Travis & Amy Halterman were named Best in Show for their “California or Bust” entry.

Highland High School girls’ basketball coach, Paul Sites, was willing to sit in the dunking booth and plunge into the cold water on a chilly night to benefit the Athletic Boosters.

Equine riders in the parade included Elizabeth & Ross Hefner, Jimmy Varner, Gail Ervine, Teresa Ervine, and Cindy Beverage.

Daisy Girl Scouts Troop 1001 presented an impressive theme float on “Pioneers of the Future” as evidenced by the spaceship and telescope design.

Carol Botkin of McDowell exhibited her home-raised lamb that won Grand Champion Market Lamb.

John Moyers, Jr. presented a trophy to Aedin Schwartz for top honors in the sheep showmanship class.

Barbara Lohr exhibited her rabbits, Blizzard and Jessica.

1989

A new cattle barn was constructed during the summer of 1989. A barn raising took place on August 5. 4-H served lunch.

Volunteers were secured to serve as gym patrols during the day and evening of fair week. These 30+ people watched that no items were mishandled while at the fair.

Helen Cornelius was confirmed for Wednesday night entertainment at \$4,500.

Officers remained the same, president—John Moyers Jr., vice president—Kenny Robertson, secretary—Mary Sweitzer; and treasurer—Bill Huffman. Junior Sweitzer and Elmer Helmick serve as managers.

Daily admission rates were increased. \$8.00 daily adult admission and \$3.00 for children.

Board meetings were held at Bill Huffman's office in the courthouse.

The gymnasium doors for exhibit viewing open at 11 am and close at 11 pm.

Maxine Shultz served as the Dog Show Chair with entry fees of \$0.75 per class.

Thaine Billingsley moved, seconded by Rodney Leech, to allow the McDowell Methodist Women to sell balloons during the fair. The motion carried.

Cappie Hull agreed to head the new Sheep Costume Contest.

The Highland Sheep & Wool Producers Association gave \$1,000 to build a new loading dock for their wool pools.

A few FFA youth constructed bleachers for the barns with lumber provided by the fair.

Tarah Waybright and Thomas Stevenson were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

1990

The horseshoe pitch went well with good comments.

The fair dates were determined by the West Virginia Amusement Company's schedule. Due to their prior commitment, the Highland Fair dates would be one week earlier in odd years.

Jim Ed Brown performed on Wednesday evening.

Meagan Gibson and Ben Ralston were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

1991

The fair was held August 21, 22, 23, and 24.

Virginia Power donated a tractor to the association.

Plans and materials are gathered for a new pavilion.

Johnny Russell was the featured entertainer.

The Little Switzerland Cloggers and the High Country Cloggers performed in the cafetorium on Friday night.

Little Miss and Master Highland winners were Meagan Rexrode and Brandon Smith.

1992

The Kendalls provided musical entertainment.

On behalf of the WVMR radio station, Gibbs Kinderman requested a live broadcast during the fair.

At the December 1992 board meeting, it was decided to have board members attend the school board meeting, December 7. At that meeting, Superintendent Dwayne Harkleroad noted that the school board intended to work with the fair on plans for the new pavilion.

Little Miss and Master Highland winners were Courtney Marshall and Jacob Colaw.

1993

Brent Obaugh was the artist for the Fair Book cover.

Mel McDaniel entertained the crowds Wednesday evening.

Stefanie Hull and Justin Siron were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

Sixty participated in the Fair Horseshoe Tournament held beside the high school tennis courts.

Sheep dog trials were held on Saturday of Fair week.

Charles William Simmons' dog received the 1993 Champion of Dog Show for Highland Residents.

1994

Fair Association is recognized as a tax-exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)3.

Jeanie C. Riley was the featured entertainer.

Laura Moyers and Cody Ralston were the reigning Little Miss and Master Highland winners.

1995

Jimmy C. Newman entertained the crowd on Wednesday evening. He also aired along with Mary Sweitzer on her radio show via WVLS.

Hannah Hull and Laramie Botkin were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

Officers: John Moyers, Jr.-President; Kenny Robertson-Vice President; Mary Sweitzer-Secretary; Bill Huffman-Treasurer; and general manager Ernest Sweitzer, Jr.

The Expressions entertained and inspired during their performance Saturday night.

Horseshoe pitch winners include Bob Hoover & David Hoover; Miranda Nicholas & Penny Vandevander, Marshall "Bub" Simmons & Eric Weeler, Melvin Rexrode & Dennis "Goose" Simmons, Alvin Cook & Robert Cook.

Cathy Sponaugle's market steer received the Grand Champion award. Amy Halterman's feeder steer exhibited the champion feeder steer. Of the 60 market lambs, Laura Crummett's lamb took home the championship.

The Monterey Lions Club Bingo games were always popular.

The Turbo Tractor, 15,000 pounds class winners were Jay Smith, Lewis Shumate, Bob Kelly, and Eddie Moyers.

1996

Connie Smith provided a very entertaining show.

Brittany Young and Charles Moyers were happy to receive the Little Miss and Master Highland titles.

Rodney Leech deemed a successful 4-H & FFA Livestock Sale. A total of 54 businesses, organizations, and individuals participated in the sale which grossed \$31,251.85 in support of the youth's livestock projects.

Herdsman award went to Tammy Shifflett, Michael Sponaugle, Robert Lightner. Shepherd Award to Sam Fish, Seth Armstrong, and Matt Lightner.

Lois Bussard organized the ads and information for the fair catalog.

Nightly Cash Drawings were awarded to Sharon Brock \$25, Joshua Curry \$50, Kenneth Armstrong \$75, and Bea Hooke \$200.

Laci Sponaugle and Erica Crigler won first place in the matched pairs horse competition class.

1997

Darrin Norwood was featured for the Wednesday evening entertainment.

Little Miss and Master Highland winners were Lori Beverage and Aaron King.

Mary Kate Cobb, on horseback, and her mother, Kathy Cobb, of Hightown braved the rain Wednesday evening to participate in the parade. Parade organizer, Sandra Bullington estimated 75 entries in the parade. The parade was led by a local color guard and the riderless horse of the late Mack Ratcliffe who had died several weeks prior to the parade. The horse, Lady, was led by his grandson, Greg. Mack carried the flag at the head of the parade over 40 years. The storm cleared for the evening events.

Greenhill United Methodist Church placed first in the theme float class. Circuit preacher Henry Brown and a chorus of voices were on their float in a church style setting.

The based goods and canned foods entries increased by 162 exhibits. The basket division was added, which provided a beautiful display.

Twenty-four 4-H and FFA exhibitors entered 51 market lambs, six market steers, and eight feeder steers.

R&R Productions Demolition Derby is a highlighted event.

The Little Switzerland Cloggers took first place in the marching group. Those in attendance were LeAnna Armstrong, Amber Botkin, Brandon Wooddell, Katie Cornelius, Dorothy Stpehenson, Tiffany Hotz, Monika Dever, and Lori Botkin. The cloggers performed on Thursday night at the elementary school cafetorium.

1998

Jett Williams provided musical entertainment.

Koodge Hiner and his mule team took second place in the miscellaneous category of the fair parade. Stu Simmons took first place.

The Highland Young Farmers sponsored the Truck and Tractor pull using their own sled.

Little Miss and Master Highland winners were Cynthia Hull and Logan Stuber.

It was a rain-free fair without trouble.

The fair purchased an acre of land which allowed for a different layout with more space.

Curtie Gutshall along with his wife, Mary Beth, chaired the dog show for their first year. They boasted 239 entries, up from previous years.

Bolar Fire Department sold 200 pounds of fresh trout sandwiches. The band boosters sold 1,800 footlong hot dogs.

The new elementary school gym was used for exhibits which went well.

1999

At the April 15, 1999 fair board meeting, "Elmer Helmick was recognized for his 'umpteens years' and many long hours over all the years with the fair. He was general manager numerous years and started when the fair began. Nick Beverage was also recognized for his many years working for the fair and the long hours he put into it. A plaque was presented by the Fair Board President John Moyers, Jr. in appreciation for what they have meant and do mean to the fair with many thanks to them for all their dedication."

Lowell Galford, FFA Advisor, asked permission to install a portable, mini greenhouse on the school and fairgrounds property, which was approved by the fair board.

The fair board approved construction of a 32x60 building near the livestock barns for livestock and dog shows and other needs.

Parade Co-chairs, Debbie Tribble and Kathy Beverage, changed the line-up location for large trucks (fire departments, squads, log trucks, etc.) to the Monterey Livestock Sales lot and turned the parade into a silent parade. They also presented the 1999 Horse and Rider parade trophy in memory of Mack Ratcliffe who led the parade numerous times while on horseback carrying an American flag.

Due to summer drought conditions, the fair made plans on handling low water needs during fair week as well as discussing concerns about whether to hold the fireworks show. It was noted that 7,000 gallons of water was used in the school bathrooms. 10,500 gallons of water were hauled in for fair week.

Rick K. and the Allnighters performed.

Food sales were down 20% over the prior year. Dog show entries were short 12 entries. Attendance was also lower. The arts, crafts, canned goods, and photography entries increased in entries and archery was a nice event.

The Lions Club sold buttons during the fair which stated, "Last Fair of the 20th Century."

Terri Puffenbarger requested that the fair purchase 20 tables for the arts and crafts department replacing the sawhorse and boards setup.

Emily Botkin and James Hancock were happy to receive the Little Miss and Master Highland titles.

2000

Last year the Blue Grass Ruritans served food (hamburgers) at the Cook Shack.

Highland Athletic Boosters sold baked potatoes, nachos, and homemade fudge.

Dean and Kathy Beverage constructed new "bleacher-style" shelving for the canned goods displays.

Busy Bee 4-H Club held a chili tasting contest to raise funds for the Selma Botkin 4-H Memorial Scholarship Fun following the parade.

Billy "Crash" Craddock performed a Wednesday night show.

The Highland Girl Scouts served Polish Sausage, pinto beans, hot chocolate, apple cider, coffer, and cake during fair week. Word of Faith church served hot fudge cake with cool whip topping and drinks. Highland County Sheep & Wool Producers sold lamb barbeque sandwiches, chips & bottled water.

The Rebel Sled was used for the Truck and Tractor Pull through Paul Shull of Maryland.

The front of school ballfield area was used for parking as in the past. The field was fixed and rolled by the fair association. The school has fenced and gated this area but gave permission for the fair to use for overflow parking if repairs to grounds are made.

Varner Logging sponsored a parade 4x4 class trophy.

In December, John Moyers resigned as association president. He served 1984-2000. He willingly attended the January 2001 meeting to start the meeting and offering training to the new president.

Savannah Arnott and Michael Humphries reigned at Little Miss and Master Highland.

2001

Officers elected were Jerry Rexrode, President; Fred Frye, Vice President; Bill Huffman, Treasurer; and Mary Sweitzer, Secretary. Junior Sweitzer served as general manager.

West Virginia Amusements provided carnival rides and games.

The fair dates were August 29- September 1 featuring the parade, the band Exile, 4-H & FFA Livestock Show, Open Livestock Show, Little Switzerland Cloggers, R&R Production Auto Demolition Derby, Kiddie Show, Tractor and Truck Pull, Youth Sheep Costume Contest, High Country Cloggers, Dog Show, Archery Contest, Horse Show, DJ Willie Smith, Old Fashioned Sheep Shearing, Gospel Music by Sunset Mountain Boys, and fireworks.

Highland 4-H set up a donut booth in the vegetable barn selling fresh donuts, juice and coffee from 8 am until 1 pm each day of the fair.

There were 95 entries in the parade...22 horses.

Doug Varner served as night watchman.

Celebrated the 50th anniversary of the fair. The fireworks show was held with a double finale. Randy Richardson asked to increase prize money for the Hunter-Fisherman trophies and add a "Best Kill in 50 Years" class. Exile was chosen as music entertainment. John Moyers noted 6 tractor pull classes and 5 truck pull classes were held. Jerry Varner furnished the trophies. Members of the Monterey Garden Club decorated the grounds with flowers. Willie Smith and band performed after the dog show. An antique Sheep Shearing organized by Glen Botkin Jr. was held on Friday following the sheep costume contest. Bolar Ruritans sold smoked turkey sandwiches, fruit smoothies, and iced tea.

Bud Cook had contacts in northern Virginia for cement barriers at discounted prices. It was decided to get 37.

Tabitha Hiner and Ethan Botkin were happy to receive the Little Miss and Master Highland titles.

The Stonewall Ruritan club's food trailer needed to be raised to accommodate customers after the roadway improvements were made behind the school. The Blue Grass Ruritans decided not to use the cook shack to sell hamburgers, which allowed the Stonewall Ruritans the opportunity to use it instead of making improvements to their trailer. The trailer was removed. The Stonewall Ruritans began selling hamburgers along with their chicken patties.

The Highland Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary was given permission to operate a cake wheel during fair week.

Mary Sweitzer shared pricing of artist for the potential fair entertainers: LeRoy VanDyke--\$6500; Dave & Sugar--\$7500; Bobby Bare--\$7000; Jim Ed Brown--\$7500; Margo Smith--\$7000; Connie Smith--\$7500. The board approved first choice LeRoy VanDyke and second choice Bobby Bare.

Jim Sponaugle reported that 18 steers, 17 feeder steers, and 79 were pre-registered for fair week.

The Fair Association acquired Post Office Box 366 for all incoming mail.

Many good comments were made about the fair. Disappointment was noted that the Monterey Lions Club food booth was unmanned.

2002

The Fair Work Schedule noted that parking will no longer take place on the school ball field. The back field is divided into East and West parking. Front gate ticket booth—Mill Gap Ruritan; back gate ticket booth—Blue Grass Ruritans; Grandstands ticket booth—Stonewall Ruritans; East parking—Bolar; and West Parking—Monterey Lions Club. Amusement Rides Ticket Booth—Mary Sweitzer and the Chamber of Commerce.

Kathy Beverage, Chair of the Youth and Adult Food Exhibits, noted a summary of entries in her department from 1994 until 2002. In 1994 there were 311 entries, which increased to 570 in 1998, and maintained a gradual increase through 2002 with 785 baked goods and canned food entries. The first recipient of the Adult Food Exhibits Sweepstake Award was awarded to Libby Nipper in 1996. In 2002, Mildred Hendricks won the Sweepstakes Award and had 137 entries in the adult food division.

The costs of the fair books were a concern. It was decided to check prices. 1800 books priced at \$2.65 each.

McDowell Fire Department is still organizing the Truck and Tractor Pull.

Char Sweet becomes the new Arts and Photography chair.

The fair book cover was white and blue with 1500 books ordered.

An answering machine was secured for the fair office.

The horse show entry fee increased by a dollar to \$6.00 per class entry.

After a couple of years with poor fireworks displays and the work involved, the board wanted to cancel. After discussing this with the West Virginia Amusement Company owner, Willie Radar, he came up with a plan to offset the cost and work associated with the fireworks. Mr. Radar would handle the fireworks for a Saturday night show.

Insurance Company requires waivers signed for parade entries.

Five new sets of portable bleachers were made. Ten new picnic tables were constructed.

A check with insufficient funds was written for a steer at the 4-H and FFA Livestock Sale. Rodney Leech reached out to the board to request \$5,000 to pay the youth participants until the bad check could be resolved.

Franklin schools sold bleachers to the fair. These were added to the grandstands to expand seating.

Cliff Waldron and the New Shades of Grass provide an entertaining bluegrass music show.

Emily Kimble was crowned Little Miss Highland and Michael Lambert as Master Highland.

2003

Holmes Stephenson and Richard Waybright were co-chairs of the Horse Show. Robin Sullenberger served as the Horse Show announcer, Dr. Joe Malcolm as the veterinarian, along with committee members: Karin Banks, Gary Crigler, Jim Cobb, Jerry Rexrode, Tina Waybright, and Crystal Stephenson.

Fred Whitelaw replaces Randy Richardson as chair of the hunter-fisher trophies department.

Bolar Ruritans constructed a new Ham Shack on the grounds. A pavilion was constructed for the Highland Fire Department to utilize.

Bolar Ruritans was granted permission to sell Ribeye steak sandwiches. The Mill Gap Ruritans sold barbeque chicken.

Junior Sweitzer reported at the March board meeting that snow caved in the ring at the sheep shed. Junior resigned as general manager after the 2003 fair.

Jim Sponaule was instrumental in securing a dumpster for the livestock waste.

The fair used a refrigeration truck to keep foods cold for fair week. The unit went bad and the fair requested space in the school freezer, who was compensated.

Asbury United Methodist Church ladies served lunch for Set-Up Day and for the judges on Wednesday of fair week.

Jerry Moats and Willie Smith checked on needs of the PA System.

Glen Sheldon was the featured entertainer.

Brooke Harper and Noah Arnott were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

2004

R.C. Pullin agreed to serve as general manager with some assistance from Junior Sweitzer.

The Athletic Boosters were granted permission to sell nacho and cheese.

Brian Keith of Staunton was the featured music entertainer.

Mary Lambert and Avery Smith were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

For her many years of serving on the fair board and securing many musical performances, the board donated to WVLS-89.7 radio station in Mary Sweitzer's memory.

A youth fisher trophy class was added to the Hunter-Fishermen Trophies department.

2005

Brian Keith returned for an encore show.

Katelyn Hise was crowned Little Miss Highland and Lucas Wimer was crowned Master Highland.

Mill Gap Ruritans served catfish sandwiches at the fair.

Robert Lambert served as the night watchman.

An asphalt sidewalk was laid from the pavilion to the grandstands...a much-needed improvement.

FFA held a Chevrolet truck raffle along with their milkshake and meat sticks sales.

The parade theme is "Country Gold—Autumn in Highland."

2006

Hannah Newlen and Will Thomas were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

The small fair paperback book was replaced with the current Fair Guide due to printing costs.

After the Wednesday evening parade, Highland Irish Dancers performed in the High School Gym. Inner Harbor, a gospel group, performed at the grandstands. R&R Productions held a demolition derby on Thursday evening; a tractor and truck pull and the Little Switzerland Cloggers entertained on Friday evening. Saturday's events included a dog show, archery, horse show, bluegrass music, 4-H/FFA livestock sale, and music at the grandstand by Private Stock/Scott Hisey & KIC Band.

Cathy Halterman, county health nurse, offered tetanus shots during the fair.

Fred Frye built 15 extra picnic tables for the grounds.

Rockingham Precast donated 8 barriers for the demolition derby.

Apple dumplings continue to be a crowd favorite. The Highland Sheep & Wool Producers sold lamb sandwiches on Thursday of fair week.

Alvy Humphreys provides wood chips for the livestock pens.

Obaugh Welding did an excellent job reinforcing the portable bleachers so that one person can move them with a skid steer.

The board paid the school \$2,000 toward the cost of a new outdoor freezer unit so the fair food vendors can have access during fair week.

Treasurer, Terry Rexrode reported that the gate ticket sales were down as well as the amusement ride ticket sales.

The Getting Place of Lewisburg WV and Covington VA were allowed to set up on the fairgrounds since the Ups and Downs Farm vendor has discontinued.

Due to a rained-out truck and tractor pulling contest, it was decided to hold it on Sunday following the fair. This helped the food vendors with their sales and provided a nice Sunday activity. No rides.

Doug Smith reported that the recycling of trash didn't go as well as hoped. Richard Waybright was thanked for bringing the recycling trailer to the fairgrounds.

Asbury United Methodist Church served over 100 for fair set up day. They also served a meal for the judges on Wednesday.

Fair ribbons were ordered, which totaled \$1,500.

Clubs were given the opportunity to draw for work detail. The results were: Grandstand Ticket Booth—Blue Grass Ruritans; Back Gate Ticket Booth—Bolar Ruritans; Front Gate Ticket Booth—Stonewall Ruritans; Back Field East Parking—Lions Club; back Field West Parking—Mill Gap Ruritans; and Ride Ticket Booth—Chamber of Commerce.

Bill Huffman was recognized for his years of dedicated service to the Association as treasurer. Junior Sweitzer was also recognized for his 15 years of service and dedication.

2007

Jadalyn Hull and Alexander Smith were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

Officers are Jerry Rexrode, President; Fred Frye, Vice President; Terry Rexrode, Treasurer; and Kathy Beverage, Secretary. Co-General managers are R.C. Pullin, Jr., and Mike Isles. Board members included Debbie Tribble, Olin Waybright, Kenny Robertson, Jed Thomas, Doug Smith, Rodney Leech, Wick Hooke, Raymond Lightner, Brian Obaugh.

Travis Lambert was hired as the night watchman.

The fair theme is “Past, Present, and Future.”

The board borrowed \$15,000 to have enough funds to start fair week.

Zero turn lawn mower was purchased for the fairgrounds at a cost of \$6,200 with payments over a 3-year period.

The board voted to reduce the commission fee for the Monterey United Methodist Church Funnel Cake booth since all funds raised go toward World Hunger.

McDowell Volunteer Fire Department agreed to sponsor a Truck and Tractor Pull as a fundraiser for the Fair Association with funds earmarked for a new sheep barn roof.

The grandstands were gated off this year to help curtail reserved seating issues.

West Virginia Amusements signed a 5-year contract to provide carnival rides and games.

Grandstand events included a gospel show by The Crestman on Wednesday night; a demolition derby on Thursday and Sundance Studio dancing; a truck and tractor pull on Friday and the Little Switzerland Cloggers; and the annual horse show on Saturday along with the Hackens Boys, Hound Dog Hill Boys. Bluegrass music on Saturday featured The Wright Kids, Hard Drive, and 220 South.

The 4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors were given the option to purchase wristbands for their season pass, which is more convenient than a ticket given the multiple times they enter the grounds during fair week.

2008

Rhea Bendel and Caleb Hiner were honored as Little Miss and Master Highland.

Archery contest had over 60 entries.

The Highland Band Boosters served regular sized hot dogs instead of the footlong hot dogs.

Theme: "A Treasurer Chest of our County's Best."

Grandstand entertainment included "The Dill Pickers" and "The Sons of Bill."

Due to several complaints in 2007, no smoking in the Bingo pavilion was set as policy.

The livestock show broke into a two-day event.

Five-Star Attractions provide a midway of fun rides and games.

The gospel group, "Heaven's Mountain Band" performs a musical show following the parade. Bluegrass music was featured on Saturday afternoon by Flattbroke, The Sprouse Brothers, and 220 South.

2009

No musical shows were featured for nightly entertainment.

Carly Thomas and Dakota Ritchie were the reigning Little Miss and Master Highland.

BLM Bull Riding and Mutton Bustin event was held on Friday evening.

A Paintball Contest was held at the grandstands on Wednesday. Two schools participated, Bath County High School and Highland High School.

The Horse Show was moved to Saturday prior to Fair week and had 231 entries.

Fair theme, "Gardens, Lambs, Quilts, and Jams."

Highland FFA constructed a new booth for milkshake sales.

"Greater Love" performed a gospel show in the High School gym.

New ticket booths were built.

Christopher Lambert served as the night watchman.

Pyrotecnico handled the fireworks.

2010

No musical shows were featured for nightly entertainment.

Erin Brendel and Colton Williams were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

Daily admission rates increased from \$8 to \$10. Season pass was set at \$15 for ages 15 and up. Youth 10-14 years paid \$5 for a daily admission ticket. Youth under 10 years were given free admission.

Dog Show added Past Champion of Shows award.

After the fair, Kenny Robertson retired from the Fair Board after 50 years of service.

Fair Board set up their first formal Food vendor request form and Use of Facilities form.

911 physical address was established for the fairgrounds.

Five-Star Attractions did not have a Ferris Wheel for the 2010 fair but promised to have one in 2011.

New sheep barn was constructed. Volunteers helped remove the existing structure. New construction by Stoneburners Inc. of Harrisonburg. Jeff & Beth Evans of Blue Grass donated the lighting for the barn.

The highlandcountyfairva.com website was established and went live on June 1, 2010.

Family Night discount ride rates were established.

Best Taxidermy Trophy was established in the Hunter/Fishermen Trophies department and was sponsored by J.R. Simmons.

Fair theme is "Bushels of Fun."

R.C. Pullin served as night watchman.

Tiffany White has taken leadership of the Baked Goods and Canned Foods Department.

A new floor tarp was purchased for the exhibit gym with the costs split three ways: School, Chamber of Commerce, and the Fair.

Handwashing stations were added near the porta johns.

Final year the Monterey Fire Department offered their dime pitch dish game.

2011

The fair theme for 2011 was “Celebrating 60 Years of Family Tradition.”

A Food Vendor Request Form was created to give food vendors an opportunity to seek approval.

Final year that the Highland Homemakers Club provided apple dumplings for sale on the grounds.

Cement pads were installed for each ticket booth to sit on. Obaugh Welding attached slots so the booths can be moved with a forklift.

The BLM Bull Riding Event didn’t have the same spark this year as in the past, except for one quite large incident when one of the bulls broke his neck.

A Civil War Mobile Museum was available for tours during fair week.

A Cornhole game competition was an added feature. In addition, the Highland Recreation Commission and Highland FFA sponsored a fast-pitch game.

WVLS—Radio Steering Committee requested space to sell raffle tickets during fair week.

John Stanford of Needmore Farm gave permission to access his property for the fireworks.

Kenny Robertson was honored for serving 50 years on the fair board. Due to this momentous occasion, the first fair dedication was initiated to recognize Kenny in the Fair Guide.

No musical shows were featured for nightly entertainment.

Maggie Harmon and John Wagner were the reigning Little Miss and Master Highland.

2012

No musical shows were featured for nightly entertainment.

Kylie Arbogast and Tristan Carpenter were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

The McDowell Volunteer Fire Department reported 86 hooks on Friday night and 80 hooks on Saturday for the Truck and Tractor Pull.

New ring fence was installed.

The 2012 Fair theme was “The Magic of Harvest.”

The Mill Gap Ruritan club was given permission to offer chicken tenders and French fries. The Highland Girl Scouts sold Polish and Italian sausage, black bean (vegetarian) burgers, and bottled drinks.

Andrew Vinson applied water sealant to the older bleachers as an Eagle Scout project.

Rare Gold performed for the Fair Dance. Faithful Praise provided a Gospel Show. Sundance Express provided a clogging show.

The NWTF--Little Switzerland Strutters offered to fundraise and build a new dressing room for the livestock exhibitors. The 12'x24' building to be located on the east side of the cattle barn will have a room for the boys and a room for the girls. This location allows for septic to be pumped to a close manhole, which allows for sinks in the building.

The 2012 Fair Dedication recognized Fred Frye for his loyalty to the fair.

The fair board agreed to have The Recorder sell and design the ads for the guide, design the pages with the association's contributed information, and print and distribute the guides for a minimum of five consecutive years.

The Archery Contest was moved to “set-up” Saturday due to an archery conflict during fair week.

The board agreed to include an indoor events facility, permanent toilets, improved food facilities, and additional seating to the draft 5-year EDA Strategic Tourism Plan.

2013

Jeremy Staubus performed a great show in the High School Gym.

Raymond Lightner was elected President of the Fair Association.

Chloe Lightner and Zachary Armstrong were reigning Little Miss and Master Highland

The Almost Amazing Rex and Dana magic show was very entertaining and held in the cafeteria during fair week.

Rare Gold performed for the Fair Dance.

The Shenandoah Valley Tractor Pullers Association held a modified lawn mower pull.

Humphries Fencing installed new fencing at the barn entry area.

Fair theme is “Homegrown, Homemade, and Homecoming.”

Rockingham Cooperative sprayed the grass around the fence lines.

A Little Miss and Master Highland float was constructed for current and future use.

Ardis Stephenson and Margie Boesch served as co-chairs of the Arts and Crafts department.

Loy Harvey took lead of the parade duties with assistance from Bonnie Harvey and outgoing chairs Heidi Simmons and Yvonne Wimer.

Doyle Moats, Jr., provide a gospel show.

Kathy Beverage, along with her husband Dean, represented the Highland County Fair Association at the Virginia Association of Fair Conference.

The 2013 Fair was dedicated to Jerry Rexrode. The horse show behind the scenes volunteers were recognized in a fair guide feature article.

2014

No musical nightly entertainment.

Kristina Neil and Joseph Will were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

Purchased 2.99 acres of land from the Lavenia Vance Bird Estate in December 2014.

Handicap parking was moved to the front of the school with parking attendants on duty to allow only those with handicap permits to park.

The handicap seating platform has been doubled in size with a metal roof added.

Golf carts were rented to be used as a shuttle service to parking areas.

An engineer from Engineering Solutions inspected the grandstands and made recommendations for repairs.

At the May meeting, the new fair logo design was presented to the board, which was approved.

The Shenandoah Valley Tractor Pullers conducted a Lawnmower Pulling Contest that was the featured event following the parade.

Fast Action Motorsports was secured as a side show entertainment option. Local businesses could sponsor a vehicle for the radio-controlled car race and were given their cars after the fair. A NASCAR simulator and tire changer challenge provided entertainment on Friday and Saturday.

The school allowed the fair to use the former radio station as a fair office until the fair can secure a better facility or until the school needs the space.

The fair theme is “Country Scenes and Children’s Dreams.” The fair guide was dedicated to Toby Swecker.

Terry Rexrode stepped down as the Fair treasurer. Alice Shumate was elected to replace her.

2015

Spent \$3,041.06 on electricity fees.

Glen Sheldon returned for a nightly show.

Fair board dedicates the Fair Guide to Bill Bratton for his many years of service.

Makynley Smith and Braiden Moats were awarded the Little Miss and Master Highland titles.

Officers included Raymond Lightner, President; Fred Frye, Vice President; Kathy Beverage, Secretary; Cindy Vrugtman, Treasurer. Co-managers: Aaron Sponaugle and Mike Isles.

Eighty-eight cars were registered for the demolition derby.

Due to the board wanting barbecue chicken offered, and after much searching for a vendor, Bill Will and crew were allowed to sell chicken and ribs during fair week.

Prior to their permanent placement, the Tourism Committee’s LOVE sign letters were on display during the parade route and in the school gym during fair week.

Sound Impression updated some of the sound system issues on the grounds.

New fencing was installed on the south property line.

The Fair theme was “Equines, Bovines, Food Lines and Fun!”

The former Maple Museum was demolished and removed from the site.

R.C. Pullin resigned as co-manager. Alice Shumate resigned as treasurer. Loy Harvey resigned as parade chair. Liz Devenny accepted the leadership for the Arts and Crafts Department.

The Fair Website and Fair Guide were entered into the Virginia Association of Fairs competition and placed third in each area.

Fred Frye proposed that the Fair hold a gun and crossbow raffle. The raffle was a success.

Patricia Cantrell and the High-Country Band performed under the big tent.

The board purchased a 2005 Caterpillar 252B Skid-Steer Loader for general use on the grounds.

The Fair started using Quickbooks software for treasury data.

Benches were secured to be placed around the grounds for additional seating options.

2016

“Banjo Picking, Truck Pulling, Pig Squealing Fun!” was the theme. Fair events included a parade, lawnmower pulling contest, Old McNally’s Pig Racing, Brinn Black, Derby, Truck and Tractor Pulling Contest, Cloggers, Corn hole tournament, gospel music, and fireworks.

2016-2018 there were no nightly musical entertainment shows.

Richard Waybright was recognized as the Fair Person of the Year.

Olivia Botkin and James Mason were awarded the Little Miss and Master Highland titles.

20 steers, 80 lambs, 35 hogs, and 13 goats were sold for the 4-H and FFA participants.

Fred Frye was recognized at the Virginia Association of Fairs banquet as the Fair Person of the Year 2016. Also attending were Linda Frye, Cindy Vrugtman, Ellen Phillips, Thelma Chestnut, and Dean & Kathy Beverage.

Granted deed for right-of-way easement across the southeast corner of the Association’s property along Myers-Moon Road near the Needmore Farm entrance for agricultural related access to the Trimble Knobb LLC property. Recorded deed in early 2017.

Renee Vandevander agreed to be the department head of Art and Photography.

The fair association purchased new horse show jumps.

David Botkin and crew completed the bird control plan in the grandstands.

The school notified the fair board that an oil spill happened on the school property, which traveled underground through the fair property, into drain tile, and eventually to the creek on the Trimble Knobb property. DEQ and others monitored the creek and clean-up efforts.

A one-page Highland County Fair history was added to a History Book of Virginia Fairs in observance of the 100th year of the Virginia Association of Fairs. Janice Estrada created a quilt square to represent the Highland County Fair for a VAF quilt of fairs that was raffled at their 2017 annual conference with proceeds going to youth scholarships.

Fred Frye coordinated a plan to recycle old fair tables to make into 16 dog show benches.

Jesse Swecker agreed to serve as treasurer of the 4-H and FFA Livestock Sale replacing Elizabeth Hefner and assistant Kathy Beverage.

2017

Dean and Kathy Beverage, Fred and Linda Frye, Cindy Vrugtman, Thelma Chestnut, and Ellen Phillips represented the Highland County Fair as the Virginia Association of Fairs Conference at The Homestead.

It was decided not to allow dogs on the fairgrounds due to liability issues and sanitary concerns. Dogs are only allowed during the dog show and limited to that area.

Addison Sponaugle and Kaden Neil were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

Due to water issues in the Town of Monterey and boiling water issues, the fair board prepared a plan on handling bottled water for food vendors. Fortunately, the town was able to get the water supply back at normal levels and passed health inspection just prior to fair week.

The 2017 fair theme was “Country Roots, Ribbons, and Rides.”

Sheriff David Neil was able to secure a Sheriff’s portable office trailer, which was placed on the fairgrounds during fair week.

Alan Puffenbarger was recognized as the Fair Person of the Year.

Highland 4-H sold healthy food options including fruit cups, yogurt parfaits, and tossed salad. With a two-day rainout, they did not profit.

Last year that McDowell Vol. Fire Department took leadership of the Truck and Tractor Pull.

Bids were received to construct an 8'x32' cement platform for handicapped seating with a roof but was put on hold until more funding was available. It was noted in the minutes that the school superintendent gave approval for this project.

A livestock trimming tent took a drastic upward wind spin on a mostly calm day bending poles and surprising many. It was noted to position this tent with back on east or west facing sides in the future. The stage awning was also damaged during the two-day storm.

Gun raffle winners were Travis Gaddy (Tuesday-cash); Justin Doyle (Wednesday-gun); Doug Harris (Thursday-cash); Tyler Botkin (Friday-gun); and Wayne Judy (Saturday-cash).

As agreed with the school, permanent chain link fencing near the school kitchen area was completed. Two new electric breaker boxes were installed near the grandstand for the carnival workers.

Season Ticket Nightly Draws included: Erin Will (\$25); Chris Moyers (\$50); Linda Neave (\$75); and Nancy Stanley (\$200)

Eighty-one entries participated in the parade, which was the best one in recent memory. Antique vehicles led off the grand parade. The Bath County High School band was a nice addition to the parade. The Cruise-in had increased participation but with coordination issues and lack of assistance, Dean and Kathy Beverage decided to make it the final year for this event.

A Monster Truck and Motocross Show was well received. The Timber Show had good attendance.

On Friday of fair week, the rain came. Day events were held including the Kiddie Show and clogging show. It was decided to offer Friday ticket holders an opportunity to use their daily admission ticket on Sunday for the postponed Truck and Tractor Pull. The lawnmower pulling contest was canceled. On Saturday, most events were held and attendance was good. Fireworks were moved to 9 PM and enjoyed by those present. With low funds due to the poor weather, it was decided not to hold fireworks next year. No grandstand event was held on Saturday evening. On Sunday, the truck and tractor pull started at 1pm which allowed the food vendors an option to sell their inventory. The rain event caused the fair board to include cancellation clauses in contracts moving forward.

The Community Foundation of Harrisonburg-Rockingham presented \$2,506 to the fair association through the generosity of an anonymous donor of the Little Swiss Fund.

Warner's Drive-in sold raffle tickets for a Gator to raise funds for their non-profit.

2018

Funds were borrowed to start the 2018 fair with year-end balance lower than the base operating funds needed.

The Community Foundation starts to distribute grants annually from the “Little Swiss Fund.” The fair requested funds for operational needs, tent replacements, and road/culvert work.

Fair theme is “Sew it! Grow it! Show it!” The fair guide’s feature story focused on the derby.

The parade moved line up for large vehicles from the livestock market to the landfill, which worked great.

Fair board dedicates the Fair Guide to Kathy Beverage for her many years of service.

Spruce Hill Excavating made improvements on the track and installed a new culvert.

4-H acquired a new vendor booth and signed a memorandum of understanding with the fair association. 4-H will sell fresh salads and fruit cups.

A new handicap platform with roofing was constructed by Rexrode Masonry.

Wilke Renovation inspected the grandstands and made minor repairs.

Gun raffle winners: Jerry Kimble, Aaron Sponaugle, Terry Allamong, Kent Gardner, and Fred Frye.

It rained 2.25” on Tuesday night and again on-and-off on Saturday, which causes delays with the dog show, but no cancellations.

Events included a Horse Show and Archery competition on set up Saturday along with a Fair Square Dance following the horse show. “Family Night” reduced price amusement rides, livestock shows, the annual parade, a lawnmower pulling contest, demolition derby, kiddie show, bike stunt show, corn hole tournament, bluegrass music, Chris Campbell Kids Music/Ventriloquism, truck and tractor pull, and The Promised Land Quartet gospel music.

A table card in the shape of a cow was purchased to promote fair dates at various businesses.

New hog washing stations were constructed. Beverage Construction donated the cement, Larry & David Wimer finished the concrete. Humphries Fencing installed new fencing at the barn. Many others were recognized for sponsoring this improvement.

Obaugh Welding and Moyers Auto Parts worked together to repair wind damaged tent poles.

The demolition derby had 80 car participants.

The Highland Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary sold breakfast biscuits on Wednesday-Friday in addition to running their cake wheel game.

Mill Gap Ruritans sold chicken tenders and French fries. The Blue Grass Ruritans sold loaded baked potatoes, loaded nachos, barbecue sandwiches and donuts. The band boosters sold hot dogs and chili dogs. The girl scouts offered hot fudge cakes and strawberry short cake. Bill Will sold chicken, green beans and slaw. The Monterey Methodist Charge was given permission to sell funnel cakes and fried Oreos. Stonewall Ruritans sold hamburgers, cheeseburgers, chicken patties, onion rings, and ice cream. Bolar Ruritans sold ribeye steak and Virginia ham sandwiches, corn dogs, and breakfast. Highland FFA sold milkshakes.

Haven Wilfong and Jaxson Will won the titles of Little Miss and Master Highland.

Officers are President—Raymond Lightner; Vice President—Fred Frye; Secretary—Kathy Beverage; and Treasurer—Cindy Vrugtman.

Mountain Boyz started handling the Truck and Tractor Pull.

Big Fish Cidery held a cider competition with judges tasting only. Most awards were sponsored by the cidery.

2019

Groups picking up trash each morning of fair week included Maple Valley Homemakers, Busy Bee 4-H Club, HHS Travel Club, and Hiner Church of the Brethren. The NWTF—Little Switzerland Strutters empty the barrels after the trash is collected.

Jeff Hiner surveyed the school and fair properties at their adjoining properties. Both parties are interested in defining property lines in an even trade to put the school greenhouse on school property and the corner of the horse ring on the fair property involving 0.277 acres. This was tabled pending legal guidance.

Moving the vegetable and ag entries to the elementary school gym and putting an Ag Education displays and interactive learning centers in the former vegetable barn was a big hit. The Ag Education area was geared toward 4–8-year-old youth. Haybales were placed at the Rt. 220 gate to advertise the fair (See “Ewe” at the Fair!) and one at the barn ticket booth (one large pig and several small ones).

Beverage Construction built and donated a portable raised stage platform for events under the big ten.

The David King, “Elvis Through the Years” Show was well received.

The Derby added a “Figure Eight” and 4-cylinder derby on a second night.

Fireworks and the Archery Contest were cancelled.

The fair theme is “Blue Ribbons Sights, Pullin’ Nights, and Midway Lights.”

Fair board dedicates the Fair Guide to Raymond Lightner for his many years of service.

Fred Whitelaw recognized deceased hunters and displayed photographs near the Hunter-Fisherman trophies.

Clifton Vandevander made hay on the fairgrounds.

The Health Department requires a ServSafe certified representative for each food vendor.

The parade lasted 90 minutes with 78 entries. Andy and Gloria Hise were married during the parade route in front of Hiner’s Auto Repairs.

The fair Facebook page had many likes and helped with announcements.

Twenty-two teams participated in the Corn Hole Tournament.

The fair announced that it’s a No Drone Zone.

Fairy gardens were added as a new class in the horticulture department.

Fair Posters were changed from the large cardboard to 11x17” paper size. This size works better in businesses and allows for better placement of information on the sign.

Ashlyn Smith and Landon Lightner were the reigning Little Miss and Master Highland.

2020

“Only Livestock Fun ‘til COVID is Done!”

A media statement made after the June 18, 2020 board meeting... “For the safety of our citizens and visitors, the 2020 Highland County Fair is cancelled. Of the 16 board members, 12 voted to cancel, 3 voted to hold it, and 1 abstained. Many board members are willing to put the work into holding the fair; however, they know it takes so many more to make it happen. The board has taken considerable amount of time to discuss this, talking with key people in the community and memberships of local Ruritans, Lions, and Chamber of Commerce, as well as fair department heads and committees before voting. The Coronavirus pandemic has caused health concerns, liability concerns, financial burdens, and added fear that will take more time before the community feels comfortable attending

and participating in this type of event. It is with great disappointment for our families, children, and those young-at-heart that we have come to this decision, but we are optimistic for a 2021 fair.”

Little Swiss grant awarded \$24,000 for fair operational needs.

Deteriorated culvert at the east field needed to be replaced due to safety concerns. An erosion issue was also addressed behind the livestock show barn. Six Jersey barriers were secured.

A few board meetings were held via Zoom and a few at the Livestock Barn.

The 4-H & FFA Livestock Show and Sale was held as an outdoor event with Market Goats and Lamb shown and sold on September 4. Market hogs, market steers, and feeder steers were shown and sold on September 5.

2021

Finances are a big factor in the fair board’s decision to move ahead with the 2021 fair in addition to the desire to preserve community and family traditions. The CDC has not changed its guidelines, so the fair made masks and hand sanitizers readily available and encouraged social distancing.

Theme: “Through the Eyes of a Child.”

Ray Gum was hired as the new school custodian and agreed to manage the school needs during fair week.

Bubble Bonanza led by Ben Hindman was well received. Hank Williams IV had a great musical performance. Vapor 4:14 provided a gospel show. Figure 8 auto derby and 8-cylinder derby on a second night. Karl Behrens Music Show was held under a big tent. Truck pull was held on Friday and Tractor and Diesel Truck Pull on Saturday. A corn hole tournament held with \$240 in prize money. A Horse Show was held on Saturday set up prior to fair week.

A pig design table card was purchased to advertise fair dates.

The fair persons of the year are Charles “Sonny” Varner and Wick Hooke.

Officers: President-Raymond Lightner; Fred Frye-Vice President; Caroline Smith and Kathy Beverage-Co-Secretary; Cindy Vrugtman-Treasurer. Aaron Sponaugle and Mike Isles serve as co-managers.

Highland Homemakers agreed to decorate the seating area by the old fair office and the Maple Valley Community club will decorate the gym.

Kylee Lightner and Easton Lightner were awarded the Little Miss and Master Highland titles.

2022

Fred Whitelaw and Debbi Stephenson were recognized as Fair Persons of the Year for their numerous years of service.

Kelsey Terry and Tucker Mason were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

“Stars, Stripes and Summer Nights” was the 2022 theme.

Raymond Lightner, President; Fred Frye, Vice President; Caroline Smith, Secretary; Cindy Vrugtman, Treasurer; Co-Managers are Mike Isles and Trey Williams.

2023

All volunteers were notably recognized for their dedication to the fair and its future.

Olyvia Smith and Kolyn Neil were crowned Little Miss and Master Highland.

“Country Nights & Neon Lights” was the 2023 fair theme.

Spencer Hatcher was the Wednesday night draw after the parade. The derby was featured on Thursday and Friday with the Truck and Tractor Pull on Saturday.

Raymond Lightner, President; Fred Frye, Vice President; Holli McVeigh, Secretary; Michael Botkin, Treasurer; Co-Managers are Mike Isles and Trey Williams.

2024

Cindy Vrugtman, Gary Crigler & Georgeanne Armstrong were each recognized as Persons of the Year for their dedication to the board and behind the scenes work.

Lorissa Vaus and Axel Beverage reigned as Little Miss and Master Highland.

The 2024 fair theme was “Growing Traditions Together.”

Jack & David Reid, The Crestmen, Cameron Simmons along with blue grass music were the musical entertainers. The Demolition Derby by Thomas Motorsports was featured on

Thursday, Bullride Mania was the featured event on Friday, and the Truck & Tractor Pull Contest on Saturday.

2025

Lacy Terry was crowned Little Miss Highland and Hennley Hedrick as Master Highland.

The Fair Guide was dedicated to Linda Frye, Todd Frye, and Lightner's Electric for the numerous years of support behind the scenes.

The Fair theme was "All Hearts Come Home to Highland."

Jack & David Reid performs a Country Music show under a big tent. The Crestmen held a gospel show. Other musical performers included local talent Cameron Simmons and Cayden Roberson.

Sky High Skyler entertained nightly on the grounds.

For the first time, a rabbit race was held following the livestock costume contest and obstacle course. A lumberjack contest was held on Friday night at the grandstands.

2026

All residents of Highland County are considered the Persons of the Year. Without the volunteers, participants, or attendees, the Fair wouldn't be successful. Everyone is important to the fair!

The 75th year theme is "75 Years of Memories in the Mountains."

A 75th Year Kickoff Event is August 29 with free admission. This includes cruise-in, games (dunk tank, BINGO, cornhole/horseshoes), food, horse show, jousting event, early entry opportunities, and early pre-registration opportunities. A history section displayed in the gym, which has an updated layout. A Historical Fair Video/Slideshow showcase will be airing on the Kickoff event and during fair week.

David King's Tribute to Elvis, High Carbon Steel, a classic country band, the Gospel Harmony Boys, along with bluegrass music by The Conner Family and Caleb Bailey & Paines Run, and Multi-Genre-Rock & Roll Pianist Jacob Tolliver are the featured entertainers. Orion Skys Drone Show to be held nightly in lieu of fireworks. Begoon Brothers Bucking Bulls Rodeo on Thursday. Power Wheels Derby and Demolition Derby on Friday, and Saturday features a Truck and Tractor Pull by Dragon Motorsports. Valley Amusements continues to provide amusement rides and games.

Officers: Raymond Lightner, President; Fred Frye, Vice President; Holli McVeigh, Secretary; Michael Botkin, Treasurer; Co-Managers are Mike Isles and Trey Williams. Others on the board include Courtney Kimble, Aaron Sponaugle, Troy Snead, Bill Bratton, James Hancock, Marc Jaccard, Caroline Smith, Jeff Baxter, Wick Hooke, Jacob Lightner, Jim Blagg, and Tracey Blagg.

Amusement Rides by Valley Amusements. Family discount for Wednesday is \$6 for Ride All Night wristbands. Thursday-Saturday wristbands are \$20 each. Daily fair admission is \$15 for ages 11 and older. Youth under 11 have free entry. A Season Ticket is \$35.

Misty Goodbar and many others participated in the fair guide cover art contest. Her drawing was placed on the Fair Guide cover. It incorporates many images of the fair along with the 75th anniversary theme.

A community quilt project was started to celebrate the 75th year and auctioned prior to the livestock sale on Saturday. Contributors include Kim Hohenstein, Pam Hoffman, Rhonda Doody, Amy Blake, Mary Dunn Conover, Margie Boesch, Terri Puffenbarger, Lucille Maloy, Taylor Lightner, Nancy Duncan, Jane Rackley, Lorraine White, Mary Stephenson, and Kate Sponaugle. Janice Estrada graciously donated one of her masterpieces to accompany the new creation and be included in the auction.

The fair board continued its annual Gun Raffle with the winning numbers determined by the Virginia State Lottery Nightly "Pick Three."

Compiled by Kathy Beverage

Sources: The Recorder, 1980-1998

Highland County Fair Association meeting minutes