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CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY

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4-H and FFA competition in full swing at the fair



ELIZABETH BINGHAM

Shaniel Matthias, 7, from Sumner prepares to show a pig for the first time in the Little Squealers Swine Show.

BY ELIZABETH BINGHAM
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The Bremer County Fairgrounds teemed with competitors Monday and Tuesday as 4-H and FFA members prepped and showed their animals.

On Monday, JuliAnna Boevers of Readlyn showed a bucket/bottle calf for the first time in the novice class. According to her sister, Mackenna, the 4-month-old calf, Marsh, "is a very nice calf, very sweet."

Mackenna was waiting to show her own three cows, plus Marsh, and shared numerous tips on how to primp the animals before competition, including cleaning their ears, clipping most of their hair but leaving the animals with a fluffy

See 4-H, A3

TUFF TRUCKS 23:

A packed house at the county fair celebrates vehicular destruction



TIM SCHUMACHER PHOTO

Over the course of driving a lap, one had to negotiate six very large berms which would send the cars and trucks airborne, to land very hard on the far side.

BY TIM SCHUMACHER
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At Monday night's Bremer County Fair, auto race fans were treated to three hours of dirt car competition sending beater vehicles over large earthen jumps that eventually sidelined most of them. Event Chairman Josh Gilbert said there were nearly sixty drivers this year, a record. They came from all over Northeast Iowa.

He summarized the rules to me as being a war of attrition. Questionably sound vehicles would be battered over the course of nearly ten, separate

laps until one managed to survive the pounding and then roar (mufflers be damned) across the last finish line victorious. "This is not a demolition Derby," he quickly pointed out, "they're too dangerous. Here, the drivers race against the clock. The fastest win." He described the vehicles involved as "either on their way to the junkyard or coming out of one."

In his pre-race speech to the competitors, he explained the situation. During the course of this orientation advisements were sprinkled, admoni-

tions such as, "if your car is dead," and "if your car winds up sitting on the concrete wall." It is a different world.

Over the course of driving a lap, one had to negotiate six very large berms which would send the cars and trucks airborne, to land very hard on the far side. On paper, it sounds simple enough, on the rigors of the track, well, it's a rolling catastrophe. The sound of one of those wrecks crashing to the ground is unique and riveting. Lots of solid rattling...

The Bremer County

Fair Queen, Lily Mayo of Sumner, told me she was also the Beef Queen and said she enjoyed both titles. She's on her way to Coe College to major in business and marketing. She drove a large rusted-out SUV on the initial lap to officially open the competition and assured me she was going to gun it over the jumps, which she did. I asked her if she was nervous and she said no, "I'm just excited to drive out there." And indeed, excitement seemed the prevailing sentiment shared by all participants.

See TUFF, A3

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Shell Rock honors veterans with Quilts of Valor



ROSEMARY WILLSON PHOTO

Terry Arends, Linda Haines and Robert Haines sit during the presentation on July 21.



ROSEMARY WILLSON PHOTO

Roger Hartzell, Roger Hinderaker and Joel Smith were honored with Quilts of Valor on July 21.

Last Friday, July 21, upwards of 90 friends and family met to honor six Shell Rock veterans with the presentation of a Quilt of Valor.

The Boyd Building was decorated with patriotic colors and flags. After the National Anthem, played by Peter Holden, Faith Lutheran's Pastor Joel Becker opened the gathering with a prayer. A casual dinner was served including ice cream provided by Jim and Gloria DeGroote. Robyn Holden emceed the program and Lavon Grimes read the poem "Tribute to All Who Gave Some and All Who Gave All," in honor of all veterans. Commander Joe Lambert read each veteran's details as the quilts were unfurled and then draped over the veterans' shoulders, a symbol of thanks and respect.

The quilters are volunteers; Grimes and Holden have made and presented over 50 quilts to Shell Rock area veterans over the last nine years.

Quilts of Valor is a national organization of volunteers that makes quilts to be presented to veterans as a symbol of thanks and remembrance for their service and sacrifice. In Shell Rock we are supported by the American Legion Avery-Slight Post 393.

Veterans receiving Quilts of Valor Friday were Terry Arends, Linda Haines, Robert Haines, Roger Hartzell, Roger Hinderaker and Joel Smith.

Bremer Co. Fair kicks off horse show at new fairgrounds



ELIZABETH BINGHAM PHOTOS

Above left: Hadley Wehling from Waverly prepares to compete in English Pleasure riding on her horse, Dancer, at the fair Tuesday. Above right: Regan Pries, 13, from Plainfield warms up her horse before showing it in the English Pleasure event Tuesday. See more photos of the fair on our website.

4-H and FFA competition in full swing at the fair

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belly, and spiking up the hair along their backs with hair spray.

"I've done this since a very young age," she said, since age 3 or 4. "I've been around cows my whole life."

Numerous competitors came to the fair from outside Bremer County. Allana Schatz, 13, from Cresco was showing two cows, including a pregnant one named Lavender. Landon Kaski from Chester was showing his winter calf, Tabitha. His dad, Eric, said they go to fairs all over the state.

"It's a full-time job just showing," he said.

On a Tuesday, numerous young people again tended to their animals across the west side of the fairgrounds.

Maverik Fettkether, "almost 11," from Dunkerton was learning the ropes about washing a steer.

"This will be his first market beef," his mom, Lisa Fettkether, said. "His first big calf, we call it. This calf was a bottle/bucket calf last year."

Braden Strottmann from Readlyn, a senior, was hosing down his market steer, Buff Bill. The black animal weighs 1,461 pounds but stood docilely for his shower.

Braden's sister, Ashlyn, in seventh grade, was helping him. She was looking forward to showing her breeding heifer Thursday.

"I like making them look pretty for show day," she said.

Breck Morris, 7, from Plainfield raked sawdust around his bottle/bucket calf named Sucker. He said his favorite part of the fair is showing his calf.

His mother, Leah Morris, said she enjoys "watching the kids grow over the years. It's fun to see old ones who were knee high and are now taller than me."

Lisa Fettkether, who grew up in Tripoli, also appreciated a historical perspective at the fair.

"My favorite part is the scramble night, Thursday night," she said. "Way back in the '90s, I was catching scramble calves, myself,



ELIZABETH BINGHAM

Mackenna (left) and JuliAnna Boevers of Readlyn wait for JuliAnna to show their bottle/bucket calf, Marsh, for the first time.



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Treyton Steege, 7, from Waverly received guidance from Waverly junior Ty Tatroe before the Little Squealers event Tuesday.

and I just enjoy watching that and seeing the kids."

In the swine barn, Clover Kids (young 4-H members) waited to show pigs in the Little Squealers Swine Show.

Treyton Steege, 7, from Waverly said that showing his pig was his favorite part of the fair. Family friend Ty Tatroe, a junior from Waverly, was helping him.

Sumner 7-year-old Shaniel Matthias was going to show a pig for the first time. She had been practicing and said she likes pigs because "they're fun to work with."

Shaniel's mentor was Macy Tiedt, 15, from Waverly.

"I basically just teach her how to show the pig," she said.

Gordon Oswald, 8, from Tripoli was also waiting to show in the Little Squealers event but had no pig to pose with yet.

"I don't know where it is," he said.

His dad explained that it was Gordon's first time to show and he was going to use someone else's pig.

Gordon shared that he had taken a 4-H class to learn how to show swine.

"We got to learn how to wash them, and we learned how to use a pig whip," he said. "You just tickle them on this side to go this way and on that side to go that way."

In the rabbit tent, the Mader family from Waverly—mom and five girls—admired a Continental Giant Doe. It was 8-year-old Al-



ELIZABETH BINGHAM

Young Clover Kids are ready to show their bottle/bucket calves at the Bremer County Fair Monday morning.

ice's birthday, and she had chosen to visit the fair in celebration of the occasion.

"It's cute and soft," she said of the large rabbit. "I want one."

In the 4-H Building, Nichole Reynolds-Thimmesch, ISU Extension County Youth Coordinator, and Kylie Meyer, from Bremer County Extension, were placing envelopes on the display of State Fair-bound 4-H projects.

Reynolds-Thimmesch said there were a lot of good 4-H projects this year, pointing out a

few unusual ones, such as a Fender-guitar shape created out of welded objects and a touch-activated lamp made out of an antique sewing machine.

She also noted that of the five refurbished tractors that had been entered, three were going to State.

"Those are huge projects for the kids," she said. "Some of these kids have been working on them since they were young."

At the new fairgrounds east of Waverly, the horse show took place Tuesday.

Hadley Wehling from Waverly, going into fifth grade, competed in English Pleasure riding on her horse, Dancer.

"[With] English you can ride two-handed," she said, explaining that her pony doesn't know how to neck rein (one-handed riding), so she can't ride Western-style.

Regan Pries, 13, from Plainfield was competing in English-style riding for the fourth year.

"She likes how the saddle feels," said her dad, Chris. "She likes jumping, that's mainly why she does it. She has no interest in the Western style."

Abilene Page, 14, from Tripoli has the opposite interest.

"I always do Western," she said.

Abilene took first place in Walk/Trot with Opal, a Palomino.

"She's very beautiful, but she's quite lazy. She doesn't like to trot," Abilene said.

The Bremer County Fair continues through Saturday night. General admission is free.



ELIZABETH BINGHAM

Gordon Oswald, 8, from Tripoli waits to show a pig for the first time in the Little Squealers Swine Show.



ELIZABETH BINGHAM

A Clover Kid shows her bottle/bucket Holstein at the Bremer County Fair Monday morning.

TUFF TRUCKS 23: A packed house at the county fair celebrates vehicular destruction

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They were going to have real fun by mercilessly rendering their vehicles scrap fodder, oh and maybe win.

And then they were racing, screaming over the jumps. Two vehicles on two separate tracks competed. There were early heats, then the fastest advanced to later rounds. The final three races were head-to-head. The last vehicles left rolling, the ones that crossed the finish line first and could successfully brake to a stop, won the checks.

There are three categories: Cars, Short Trucks, and Long Trucks. In

the Car Division, over half the late model eyesores (decorated colorfully by spray paint) had broken down after the first two rounds. In competition, car body parts flew everywhere: fenders, mirrors, entire bumpers. Wrecking trucks were ubiquitous as many vehicles simply stopped working in mid-lap. No one was injured, other than perhaps for some wounded pride.

But from start to finish, for several hours, oh boy. The sights, sounds, and smells were engrossing.

Any number of calamities befell the intrepid drivers. Trucks stalled, several got hung up going over the jumps and had to be pushed back down to the track. The hood on one car flew open and couldn't be

closed, rendering the driver blind. One SUV went flying over a jump and came down nose first on the other side, its front end landing in a hole that competition had created. It stood there, vertical, until help arrived. No one had ever seen one of those before.

There were never any collisions. No roll-overs. Just relentless damage done to otherwise innocent conveyances, most of which looked like they couldn't run even before the first race. The crowd screamed and clapped at their efforts. There were lots of children there. They loved it. They especially lit up when drivers crash-landed on the dirt. As the emergency vehicles were coming out to haul in another wrecked auto that had died right in front of where I was sitting, a little girl next to me, a toddler, pointed her finger at the smoldering wreck and said, "He broke it." Yes, he did.

There was a growing pile of parts discarded near the finish line. People came up to take them, for what reason I cannot imagine.

The Fair Queen and her friends fired T-shirts into the crowd. Food and drink was everywhere all the time. And little kids quickly fell to doing what they most love to do in such situations, chase each other all over the place. Needless to say, a good time was had by everyone. You gotta experience it to believe it. The energy was palpable.

After the race, I talked with the winner of the Car Division, Terry Reicks of Vinton, Iowa, age 31. He



TIM SCHUMACHER PHOTO

After the race, I talked with the winner of the Car Division, Terry Reicks of Vinton, Iowa, age 31. He was all sweaty with grimy hands, but beaming, holding his winning check of \$500.00.

was all sweaty with grimy hands, but beaming, holding his winning check of \$500. He told me he travels the northeast Iowa circuit of such events.

"Waverly is the best of them," he said, "they do things right here."

He was driving a 2002 Buick Century, or what was left of one. I asked him what repairs would be necessary before the next race. He said, "Radiators take a real pounding, because the car often lands directly on them after a jump. But I just fix enough to get me to the next one and let it go from there." He added that it was painful to land after a

jump, but you don't feel it until the next day.

I asked him why he did it. "It's safer than a demolition derby," he allowed, "and less expensive than a stock car race." That made sense. He went on, "It might look like we're going slow from the stands, but if you're in the car, you're moving. Feels like you're doing 100."

So there's that thrill-of-the-race thing. This actually seems a safe way to get that out of one's system. Something for young competitors, men and women, to do with their spare time and money.

A great night was had by all.



TIM SCHUMACHER PHOTO

The Bremer County Fair Queen, Lily Mayo of Sumner, drove a large rusted-out SUV on the initial lap to officially open the competition.