

# Exploring the Oregon State Fair



This exhibit uses photos, artwork, audio files and video links to showcase scenes from the wacky, weird and wonderful world of the Oregon State Fair over the decades. No institution reveals the spirit and character of Oregon better than this annual celebration.

**Credits** —read about who created this exhibit



A girl being pulled by a dog and a boy carrying corn check out a directions sign at the 1950 Oregon State Fair in Salem. (Oregon State Archives, Oregon Fair Exposition Center)



## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Introduction



A circa 1970 State Fair poster pokes fun at President Richard Nixon. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)

### Early Years

Take yourself back to the 1850s. Imagine no television, no computers, no smart phones, no internet, no radio, no recorded music, no electricity, no airplanes, no automobiles, and long periods of isolation with only dirt roads that turned to muddy ruts after rains. Without today's fingertip access to endless entertainment options, the attraction and excitement of going to a state fair must have been irresistible.

The Oregon State Agricultural Society and the Oregon Fruit Growers Association seized on this idea in 1861 to establish the first official Oregon State Fair on the banks of the Clackamas River near Gladstone. The next year, the fair moved to its current location in Salem and continued over the years to add acreage to its site to accommodate the growing crowds.

Oregon was overwhelmingly agricultural in the 1800s and the State Fair offered farmers and ranchers an opportunity to share ideas about crops, new techniques and new equipment. They could show off their prize pumpkins and race their fastest horses. Family members could win ribbons and bragging rights for their pickles, apple pies and quilts. Everyone could marvel at exhibitions of amazing new inventions such as the telephone and gramophone in 1877.

### Advances and Growth

Transportation advances played a key role in the growth of the State Fair in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The expansion of railroads made it easier for fair visitors to get to and from Salem while new streetcar service soon would take people right to the entrance gates. The rise of automobile travel and the rapid paving of roads further accelerated attendance at the fair beginning in the 1920s. Participants could travel more easily from far corners of the state and truck their livestock for exhibition.

Entertainment options quickly expanded at the fair as well. The state took over operations in 1885 and began investing tax money into its programs and facilities. A package of 1893 improvements saw the building of a mile-long oval track for horse racing, a wildly popular draw to the fair. Traveling vaudeville



A 1970 State Fair decal. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)

troupes performed their zany variety show mix of comedy, slapstick, music and more. Circuses and musical band concerts added to the entertainment.

Carnival attractions grew more elaborate over the decades with death-defying rides and unbelievable oddities. Carnival

barkers on the midway beckoned the next guy to “step right up” and prove to his sweetheart that he was the strongest, the best shot or the most skillful. Those who scored highest at these games won the biggest stuffed animals, a sure sign of prowess. Food booths offered fairgoers treats that came to be central to the identity of the State Fair—from cotton candy to corndogs.

## Today's Fair

Today, the State Fair continues to extol the virtues of rural living and agricultural values. While the number of people directly engaged in agriculture has plummeted in the state, most Oregonians still feel a deep connection to the heritage and cultural roots that are celebrated once a year in Salem. The event remains relevant because all of us can learn more about ourselves from the sights, sounds and smells of the Oregon State Fair—a place, but even more, a community.

This Web exhibit, based on a gallery exhibit at the Oregon State Archives, shows significant features of the State Fair over the years. These include livestock exhibits, contests, food, horse racing, entertainment, oddities, rides and games. Captioned photographs, combined with related audio files and links to videos, take viewers on a tour of a quintessentially Oregon event. So grab your ticket and click the “Next” link below to enter the wacky, weird and wonderful world of the Oregon State Fair over the decades!

## Learn More

Preview the book *The Oregon State Fair* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=6JBnbiUCJMoC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>) by Steven Robert Heine via Google Books.

*The Oregon State Fair* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=6JBnbiUCJMoC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>) by Steven Robert Heine via Google Books.



Governor Tom McCall uses a mallet to ring a bell opening the 1967 Oregon State Fair in Salem. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



This ticket was good for one ride at the 1970 State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



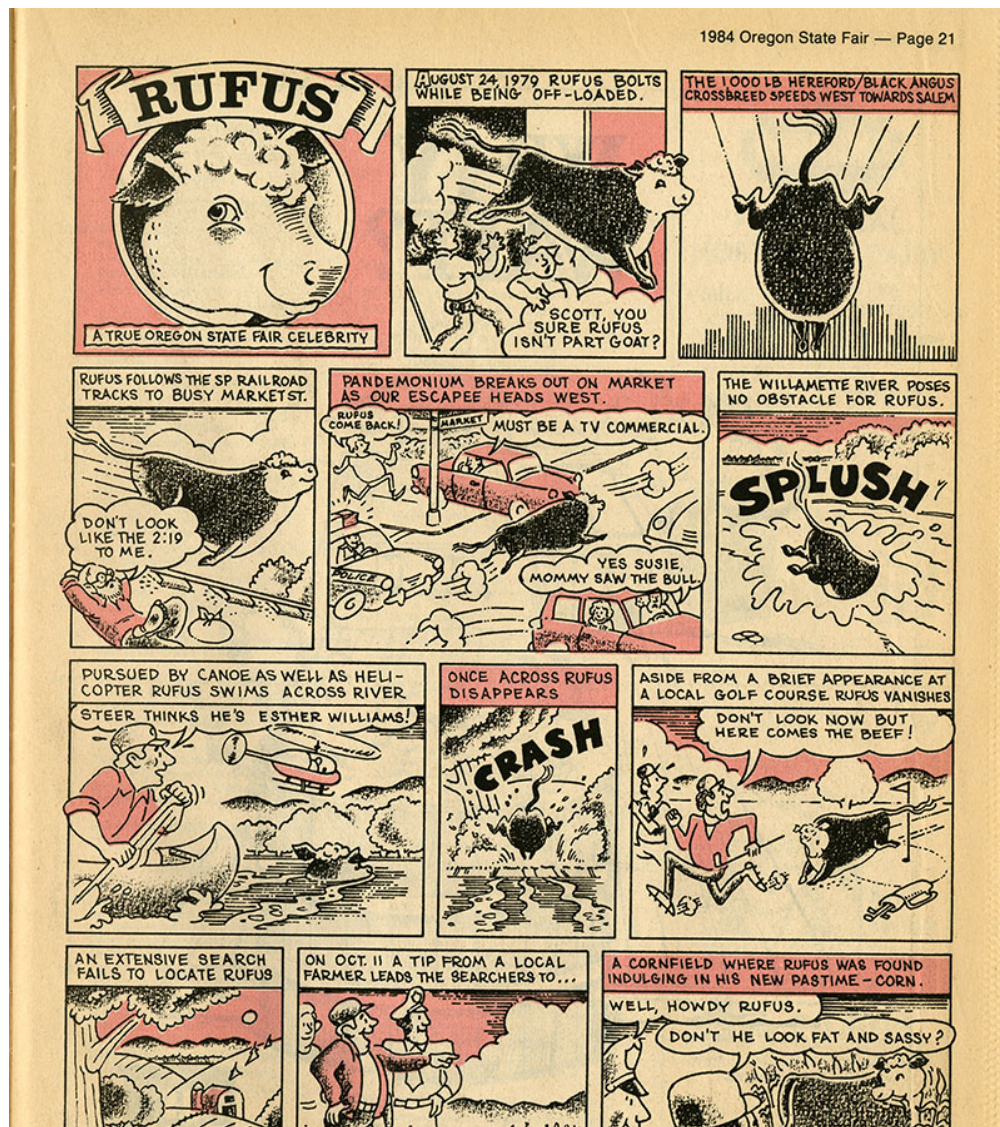
(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Livestock Exhibits

### Rufus the Bull

Rufus the runaway steer (although he answered to Bull) caused quite a stir in 1979 when he escaped and led officials on a ... wild bull chase. This cartoon tells the story of his daring exploits and his admiring public. By the next year, Rufus had become a celebrity and was one of the most popular features at the State Fair, where he held court in a specially constructed pen near the Yellow gate. A local radio station provided the "Ballad of Rufus" song on tape for visitors to get in the mood. Security guards stationed nearby to keep tabs on the "Bye-Bye-Beef" apparently couldn't get the ballad out of their heads. They were still humming it after hearing it played countless times for visitors.

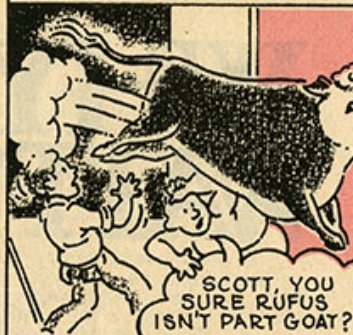
Watch a television news story about Rufus the Bull (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMFOHZFvrSo>) via YouTube.



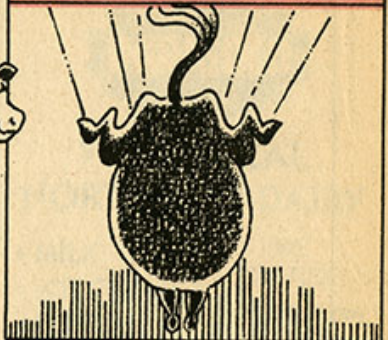




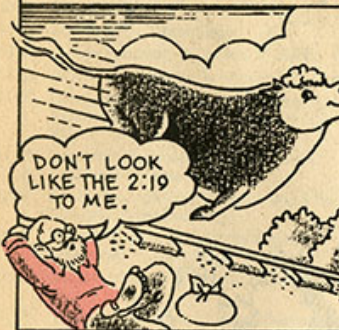
AUGUST 24, 1979 RUFUS BOLTS WHILE BEING OFF-LOADED.



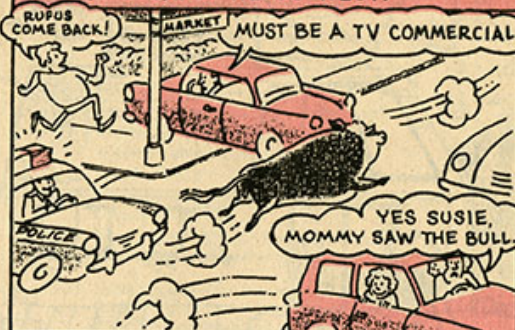
THE 1000 LB HEREFORD/BLACK ANGUS CROSSBREED SPEEDS WEST TOWARDS SALEM



RUFUS FOLLOWS THE SP RAILROAD TRACKS TO BUSY MARKET ST.



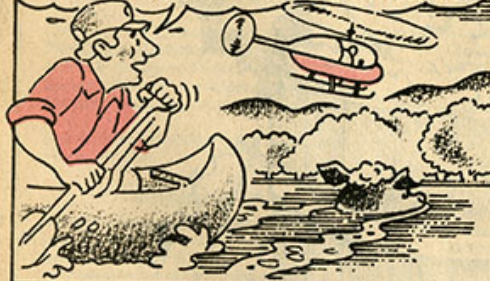
PANDEMONIUM BREAKS OUT ON MARKET AS OUR ESCAPEE HEADS WEST.



THE WILLAMETTE RIVER POSES NO OBSTACLE FOR RUFUS.



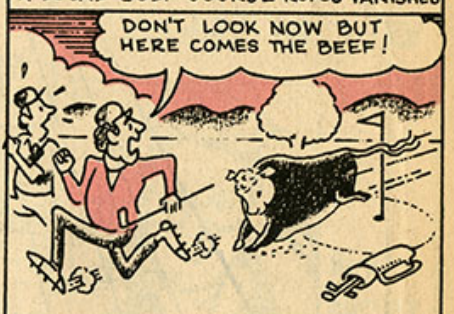
PURSUED BY CANOE AS WELL AS HELICOPTER RUFUS SWIMS ACROSS RIVER  
STEER THINKS HE'S ESTHER WILLIAMS!



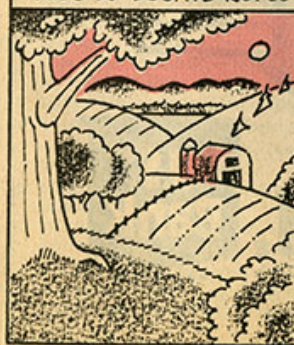
ONCE ACROSS RUFUS DISAPPEARS



ASIDE FROM A BRIEF APPEARANCE AT A LOCAL GOLF COURSE RUFUS VANISHES



AN EXTENSIVE SEARCH FAILS TO LOCATE RUFUS



ON OCT. 11 A TIP FROM A LOCAL FARMER LEADS THE SEARCHERS TO...



A CORNFIELD WHERE RUFUS WAS FOUND INDULGING IN HIS NEW PASTIME - CORN.



NOTE: RUFUS WAS BOUGHT BY FAIR OFFICIALS WHO ADMIRER HIS GET UP AND GO. HE HAS SINCE BECOME A REGULAR EXHIBIT AT THE ANNUAL STATE FAIR IN SALEM.

Design: Don Thomas

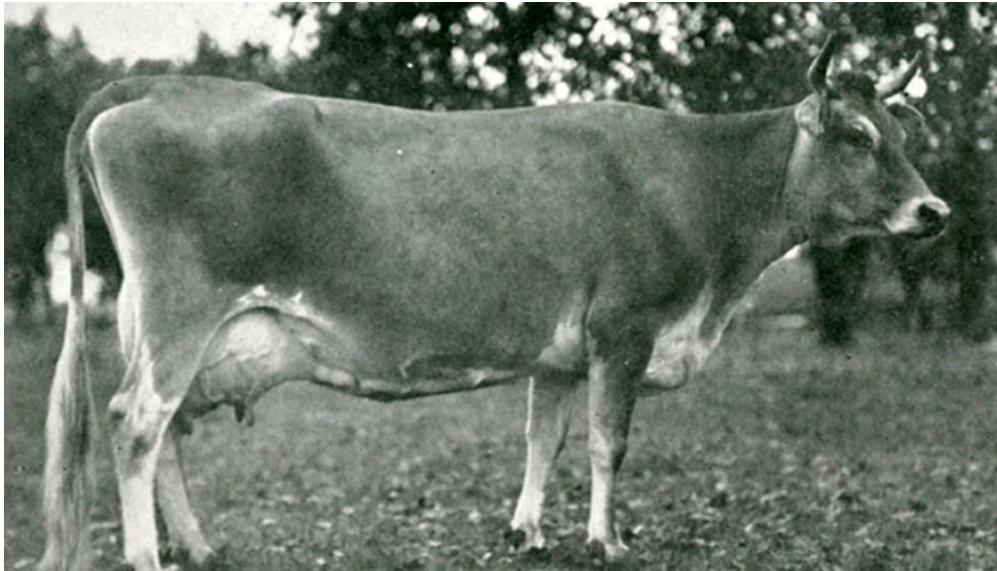


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## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Livestock Exhibits

### The Wonder Cow

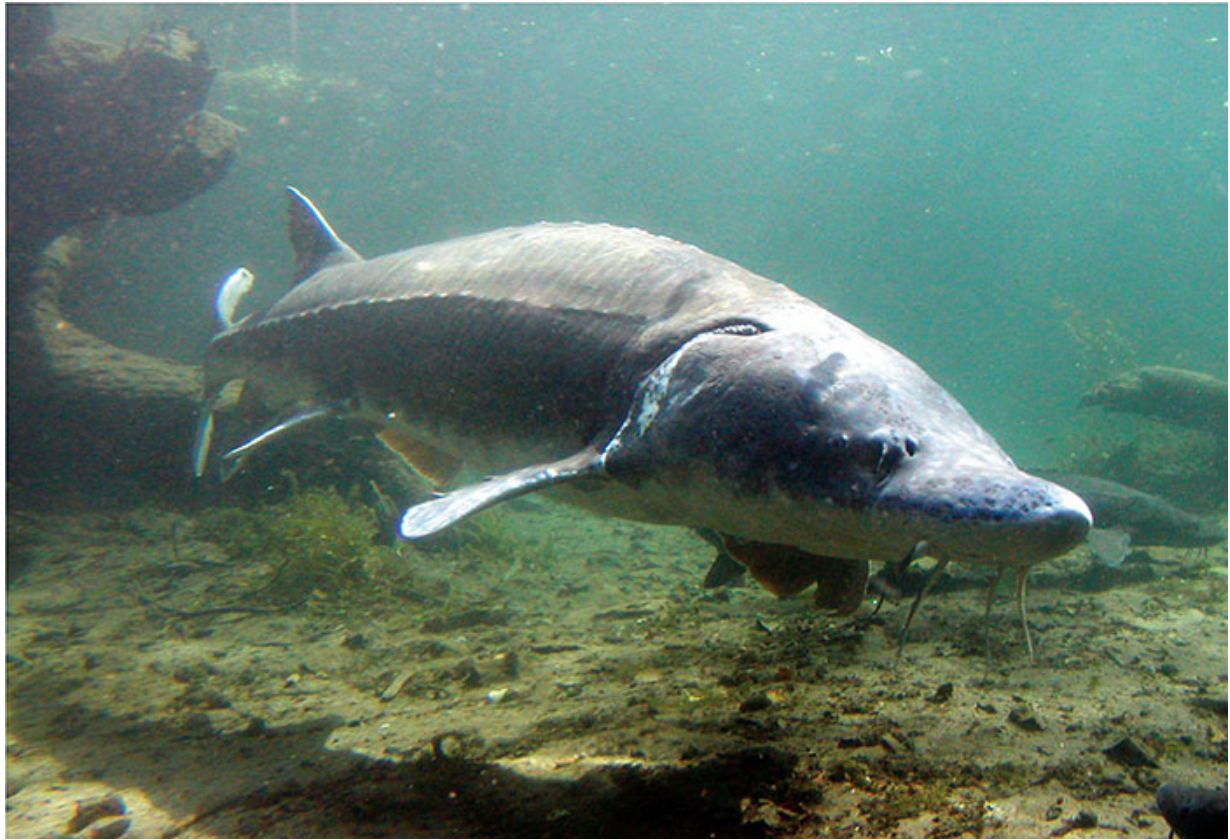
Ovid Otis Pickard, a well-known cattle breeder in Marion County, was the proud owner of the 1919 grand champion Jersey cow Vive la France. Dubbed The Wonder Cow, she was internationally famous for her record-breaking production of over 5000 pounds of butterfat in a six-year period. When Vive died, she was honored with a burial in front of Ovid's home and a granite tombstone to mark her final resting place. After Ovid's death, Vive and her granite tombstone were moved to the Oregon State Fairgrounds between the Poultry and Livestock buildings.



Vive la France the Wonder Cow. (Willamette Heritage Center)

### Herman the Sturgeon

Herman the Sturgeon, Oregon's most famous fish, was a fixture at the Oregon State Fair for nearly 50 years. He is so popular that he has his own Facebook page, starred in a National Geographic documentary, and was in a music video. Herman is over 79 years old, is 11 feet long and weighs in at about 500 pounds. Herman "retired" from making appearances at the Oregon State Fair in the mid-1980s and now resides at the Bonneville Fish Hatchery.



Herman the Sturgeon. (Oregon State Library)

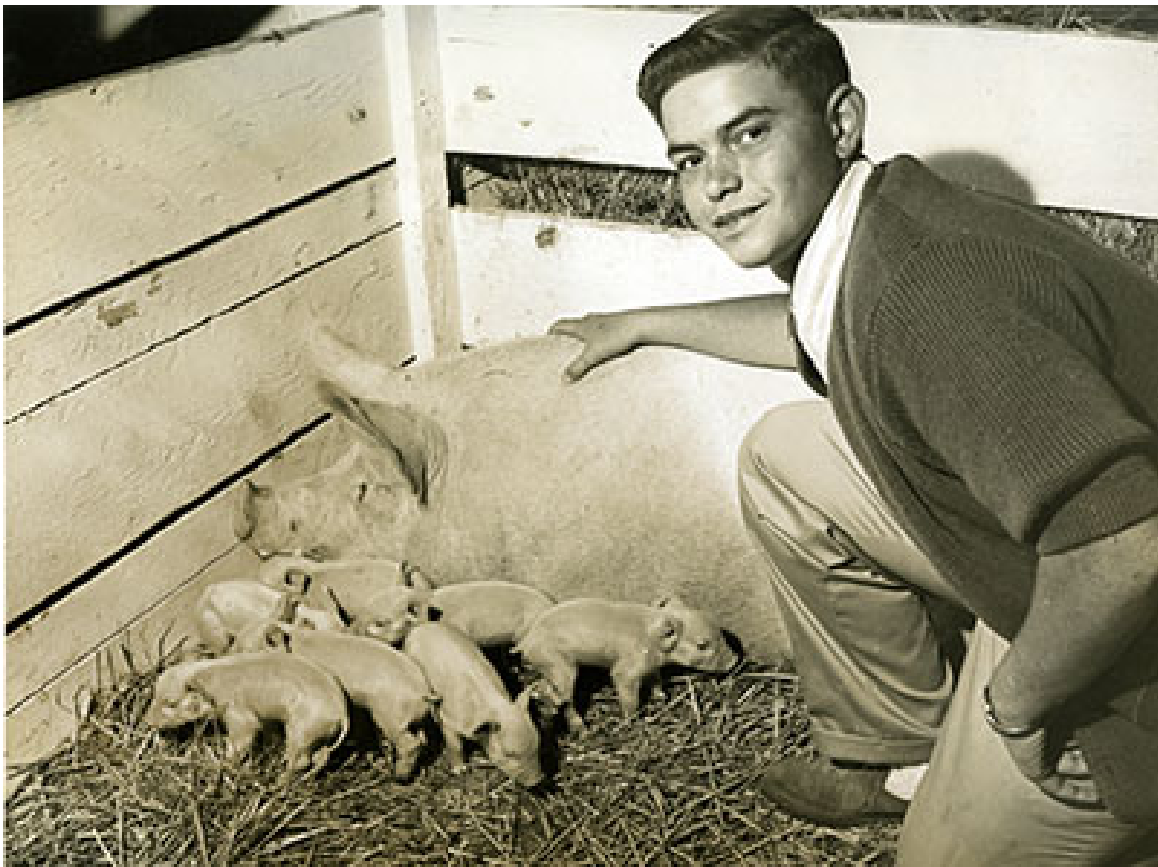


(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Livestock Exhibits

### Less Famous Livestock

Not every cow, pig or goat can be a star but they can still win prizes and endear themselves to their owners and to fairgoers. In fact, polls from 1985 and 2000 revealed that livestock continued to rate as the number one reason why people attended the State Fair. Here are some of the animal characters that have passed through the gates of the State Fair over the years.



A boy poses next to a sow and piglets at a State Fair pen in 1964. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)



A girl writes on a notepad in a pen at the State Fair as a calf looks on. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)



A boy hugs a goat at the 2000 State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)





A girl and her State Fair grand champion llama show off their award and ribbon. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



A girl grooms a sheep while a television news reporter talks to the camera at the State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



Fairgoers admire a grand champion boar in 1912. Size was the primary criterion for judging animals in the early years of the State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, Oregon Fair Expo Center Photos)





Men stand next to cattle at the 1950 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives)



Competitors dressed in coordinated costumes with their llamas parade in front of spectators at the State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)

(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Livestock Exhibits

### More Cute Animals!

Who can see enough cute animals and kids? Children and learning have always been at the heart of the State Fair. In association with county fairs and programs such as Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H, children at the State Fair learn countless farm- and ranch-related skills. Perhaps more importantly, they develop discipline and responsibility that will serve them well regardless of their future careers. So, in honor of that, here are more cute animals and kids.



A boy and a woman bottle feed hungry goat kids at the State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)





Nine-year-old Treva Falk of Halsey shows two small black and white calves during State Fair competition in 1939. (Oregon State Archives)



Kids play cards in a pen at the State Fair while the goats seem more interested in snacking on the cards. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)



Children and livestock dress up and parade for the crowd at the 1971 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)





Cows, goats, and livestock of all kinds tour the State Fair during the animal parade. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



Sixteen-year-old Cheri Edwards of Lebanon shows off her first prize Angus calf at the 1967 State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)

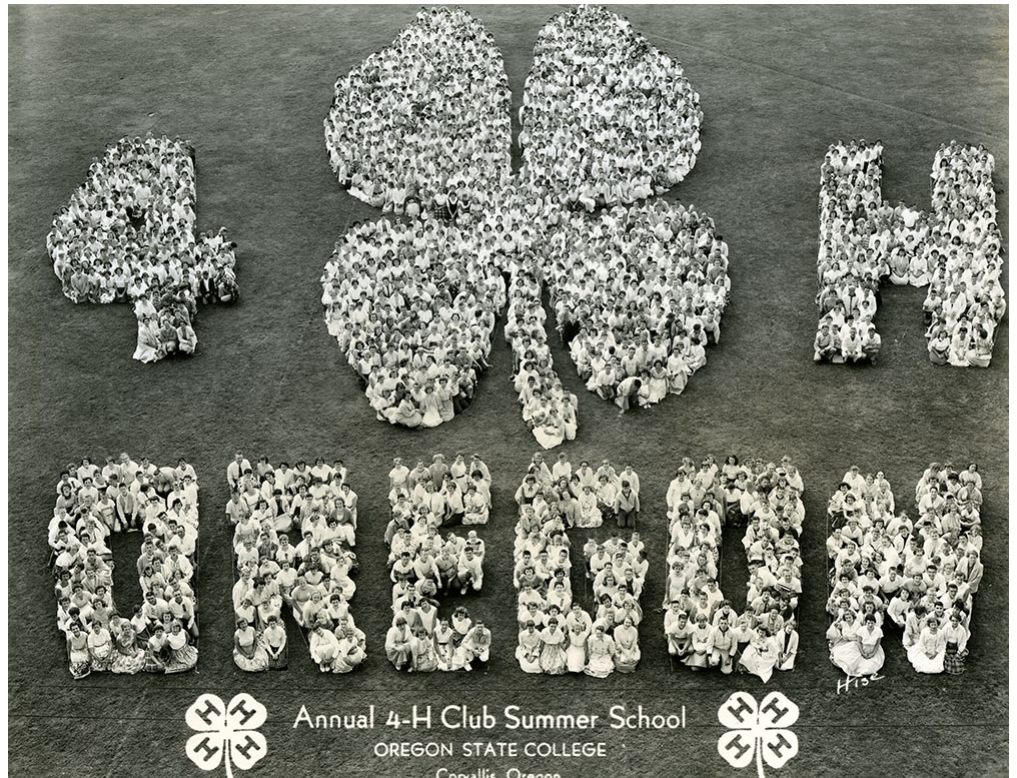
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## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Dear Mr. Spitzbart

### One Man's Lasting Influence

Leo Spitzbart, manager of the State Fair from 1935 to 1957, grew up in Salem on his father's prune orchard overlooking the fair. "In fact, he was so close that he could look over the grounds, and it was natural that he was around the grounds a lot," the *Salem Statesman* reported in 1955. Spitzbart remembered "the first nickel he ever earned was at the fairgrounds."

A favorite part of Spitzbart's job was awarding thousands of scholarships to 4-H students who exhibited their work at the fair. The scholarships allowed students to attend a two-week, 4-H camp at Oregon State University, where Spitzbart received a degree in agriculture.



Hundreds of students participating in the annual 4-H Club Summer School at Oregon State College in Corvallis form the 4-H logo. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)

In 1948, 4-H awarded 1,800 scholarships worth \$24 each, for the 10-day, annual 4-H Summer School on the OSU campus.

Spitzbart's efforts did not go unrecognized. The students who received scholarships during Spitzbart's tenure showed their appreciation by writing countless thank you letters to him, a few of which are shown below. And, Oregon State University now offers the Leo G. Spitzbart Memorial Scholarship to an outstanding 4-H member who has participated in the State Fair and who plans to attend OSU.

### Listen

[Listen to children reading thank you letters to Leo Spitzbart](#)



### Read Letters



Here is a sampling of letters written by grateful children to Spitzbart.

Beavercreek, Oregon  
June 5, 1943

Dear Sir,

I am at summer school and having  
lots of fun. I am staying at Kappa  
Delta Rho. It is a very nice house.  
We have had a number of assemblies  
motion pictures, and assemblies in the gym.  
We also had a nice church service on  
Sunday. I never realized the place would  
be so nice. When I sent my work to  
the State Fair I never thought I would  
get a scholarship but I did. I want to  
thank you sincerely for the scholarship,  
and my first prize

yours truly,  
George Massingle

George Massingle of Beavercreek wrote this 1943 letter to State Fair Manager Leo Spitzbart about the many 4-H Summer School activities on the campus of Oregon State College. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)

## George Massingle Letter Transcript

Beavercreek, Oregon

June 5, 1943

Dear Sir,

I am at summer school and having lots of fun. I am staying at Kappa Delta Rho. It is a very nice house. We have had a number of assemblies, motion pictures, and assemblies in the gym. We also had a nice church service on Sunday. I never realized the place would be so nice. When I sent my work to the State Fair I never thought I would get a scholarship but I did. I want to thank you sincerely for the scholarship and my first prize.

Yours truly,

George Massingle



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK  
IN  
AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS  
STATE OF OREGON  
CORVALLIS

OREGON STATE COLLEGE AND  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COOPERATING

EXTENSION SERVICE

Dear Mr. Spitzbart,

4 If Summer School is wonderful. I am having a very good time besides learning lots of things in our morning classes. There are all sorts of things to keep us busy all of the time. In orchestra I play the piano, and yesterday afternoon I went down to the K.O.A.C. studios to try out for playing the piano on the radio. The radio men Mr. Morris, and Mr. Hutton have not told any of us yet how we came out. Thank you ever so much for giving me a scholarship. I am having the time of my life down here, and I owe it all to you.

Sincerely,  
Ida Lou Hagg  
Reedville, Oreg.

Ida Lou Hagg of Reedville sent this circa 1940s letter to State Fair Manager Leo Spitzbart about trying out to play the piano on KOAC radio on the campus of Oregon State College. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)

## Ida Lou Hagg Letter Transcript

(This letter is written on stationery branded "Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, State of Oregon, Corvallis".)

Dear Mr. Spitzbart

4 H summer school is wonderfull[sic]. I am having a very good time besides learning lots of things in our morning classes. Their[sic] are all sorts of things to keep us busy all of the time. In orchestra I play the piano, and yesterday afternoon I went down to the K.O.A.C. studios to try out for playing the piano on the radio. The radio men Mr. Morris and Mr. Hutton have not told any of us yet how we came out. Thank you ever so much for giving me a scholarship. I am having the time of my life down here, and I owe it all to you.

Sincerely,

Ida Lou Hagg

Reedville, Oreg.



June 19-1949

Dear Mr. Spitzbart

I wish to thank you for the scholarship to 4-H summer school. There is so many things that I can't list them all, I have learned a lot about judging, caring for livestock, and getting your animals to show.

We go swimming, play softball, volleyball, and etc. We will have a swimming meet today with the other houses. I have learned how to swim thanks to you. I just wish that every boy and girl involved in 4-H club work could be awarded a scholarship to 4-H ~~summer~~ summer school here at the college campus at Corvallis Oregon. There happens to be about 1100 kids down here this year. Thanks to you Mr. Spitzbart, and every body else connected with giving me that lovely scholarship.

Sincerely yours,  
Glen Arnett

Glen Arnett commented that he couldn't list all of the fun things to do at 4-H Summer School in this 1949 letter to State Fair Manager Leo Spitzbart. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)

## Glen Arnett Letter Transcript

June 19, 1949

Dear Mr. Spitzbart

I wish to thank you for the scholarship to 4-H summer school. There is[sic] so many things that I can't list them all. I have learned a lot about judging, caring for livestock, and fitting your animals to show.

We go swimming, play softball, vollyball[sic], and etc. We will have a swimming meet today with the other houses. I have learned how to swim thanks to you. I just wish that every boy and girl involved in 4-H club work could be awarded a scholarship to 4-H summer school here at the college campus at Corvalis[sic] Oregon. There happens to be about 1909 kids down here this year. Thanks to you Mr. Spitzbart, and everybody else connected with giving me that lovely scholarship.

Sincerely yours,

Glen Arnett



**ANN**

Pi Kappa Phi  
218 Harrison  
Corvallis - Oregon

Mr. Leo Spitzbart.  
Mgr. - Oregon State Fair  
Salem, Oregon

Dear Mr. Spitzbart,

I am writing to express my appreciation for the opportunity you have given me to come to this 4-H Summer School. It is a wonderful experience to come here. This is the second year you have given me a scholarship to come and each summer school seems better than the previous one.

We have been having some very good classes this year. One of these was a class in

Ann Roth marveled at seeing synthetic rubber made "right before our eyes" at 4-H Summer School in this circa 1940s letter to State Fair Manager Leo Spitzbart. (Oregon State Archives, Oregon Fair



Potatoe Block Printing. As you can see the stationery on which I am writing is some I made by the use of a carved potatoe and poster - paints. I also attended a good class - Preview in Progress. The two demonstrators made synthetic rubber right before our eyes, and also explained the principals of jet propelled engines.

In connection with the house, Pi Kappa Phi, where I'm staying, we've also been having lots of fun. We have had an exchange dinner, a backwards dinner, and a picnic.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to attend U. of O. Summer School.

Sincerely yours,  
Ann Roth -



## Ann Roth Letter Transcript

(The letters "ANN" appear in red paint in the upper left corner of this letter.)

Pi Kappa Phi

21 & Harrison

Corvallis, Oregon

Mr. Leo Spitzbart

Mgr. Oregon State Fair

Salem, Oregon

Dear Mr. Spitzbart,

I am writing to express my appreciation for the opportunity you have given me to come to this 4-H Summer School. It is a wonderful experience to come here. This is the second year you have given me a scholarship to come and each summer school seems better than the previous one.

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(continued on page 2):

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Thank you once again for the opportunity to attend 4-H Summer School.

Sincerely yours,

Ann Roth

(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Contests

### From the Predictable to the Bizarre

Competition adds spice to life, which has made the State Fair a very spicy place! The first few fairs provided awards for such things as target shooting, salt rising, hop yeast, soda biscuits, ox yoke, axle grease, horse shoeing, butter and ice cream churning and currant wine. An early premium list noted awards for the best exhibit of mechanical dentistry, best penmanship, and hat and gown making. Over the decades, the range of competitions and contests grew with the times, often in bizarre and unexpected ways, but always adding to the color and diversity of the State Fair. Here are some of the ways that Oregonians have competed for some amount of fame, if not fortune, at the fair.

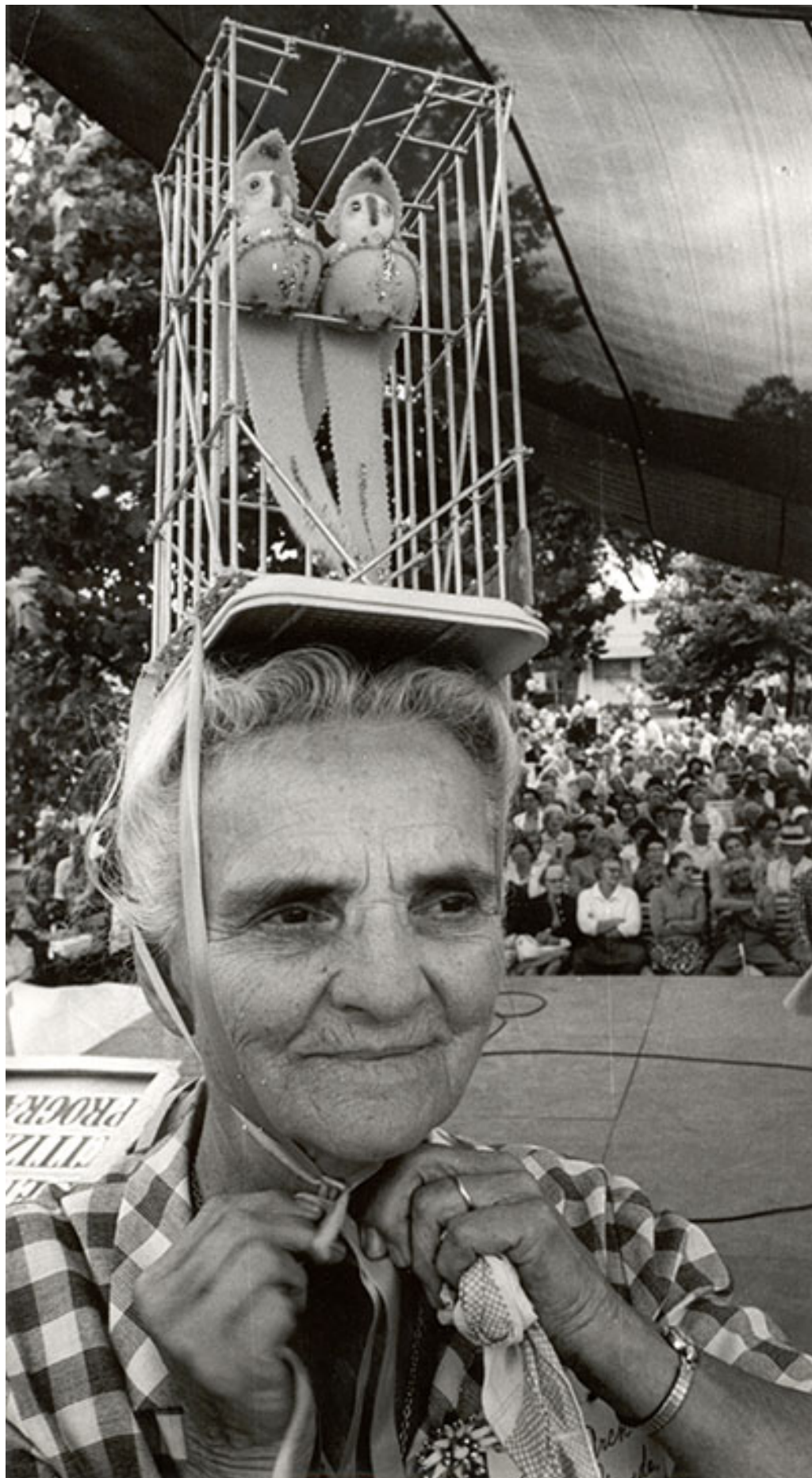


A man gives out a yell as he holds the trophy for winning the Hog Calling Competition at the State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)





Boys show different emotions during the Pie Eating Contest at the State Fair.  
(Oregon State Archives, Oregon Fair Expo Center Photos)



A woman cinches up her hat during an aptly named Strange Hat Competition at the State Fair. (Oregon State Archives)





**DIAPER DERBY** entrant Lonna Marie Chase, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Chase, 3070 Deer Park Drive SE, practices for the State Fair's newest event. The child will compete Sept. 9 in the derby. Her mother thinks she

crawls better when there's an attraction at the end of the line, like her cuddly bunny. Mr. and Mrs. Tom Stevens of Lebanon also have entered a child in the derby. (Capital Journal Photo by Gerry Lewin)

A mother holds a stuffed bunny in front of her daughter as they practice for the first Diaper Derby at the State Fair in 1964. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)



This man has one of the sweetest jobs around, judging the entries in the Chocolate Cake Competition at the State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)



Kids through age 14 learn life skills by participating in the Needle in a Haystack Competition at the 1959 State Fair. The haystack was stocked with ten needles, each one worth \$5 to the lucky finder. (Oregon State Archives State Fair Photos)





Gerry Frank, self-proclaimed chocoholic, judged his 27th chocolate cake contest at the fair.

Statesman-Journal photo by Dean Koepfler

# Chocoholic heaven

## Gerry Frank does duty at annual cake contest

By Lewis H. Arends Jr.  
Of the Statesman-Journal

What does a man who tastes 73 chocolate cakes in two hours have for dinner?

While judging the 27th annual Gerry Frank chocolate cake contest Sunday afternoon at the Oregon State Fair, Frank drew a laugh from the spectators by displaying a bottle of Pepto-Bismol and calling it "dinner."

Between bites, the Salem businessman and assistant to U.S. Sen. Mark O. Hatfield kept up a running commentary on the fine art of cake judging and chocolate as an industry.

He takes two bites of each entry, one of the cake and one of the frosting, to determine his scoring. Sunday afternoon saw him working his way through 158 bites, since he had to retaste a half dozen cakes.

He finally decided that the best cake was baked by Christy Brown, Salem. While climbing to the stage in the Jackman-Long Building, Brown asked a surprised, "Are you sure?" She said she thought the cake was dry and the frosting hard.

"That's not true," Frank said.

Each of the top seven places earned a ribbon and a savings account from American Federal Savings & Loan. Brown's entry was worth \$50 and in addition she received a State Fair Cook Book and a party for 12 at Frank's Konditorei, a Salem dessert shop.

Brown said she had baked her winning recipe just twice after spotting it in an old chocolate cookbook. It was the seventh year she had entered the cake contest.

Salem sisters Jenny, 13, and Sherri Stanton, 15,

collaborated on the second-place cake. They will divide a \$40 savings account.

Frank said he has been a fixture at the fair because of "the only political payoff" Hatfield ever made. When Hatfield was first running for governor, Frank asked his friend — if he won — to have the fair board make him a chocolate cake judge. Hatfield won and Frank earned the judging role.

The rules for the contest say that the cakes must be made from scratch by amateurs, he said. He often is asked how he can tell if it is a mix cake.

"I think that comes from experience. I think you can tell," he said.

While he is judging, he said he checks the taste, moisture, appearance and "frankly, how well I like them. I have never made a cake in my life, but I am a chocoholic."

The number of entries at the annual contest ranged from three the first year to 130 in 1984, the 25th annual contest. The one year the rule was changed from chocolate to spice cake, he said entries fell off drastically.

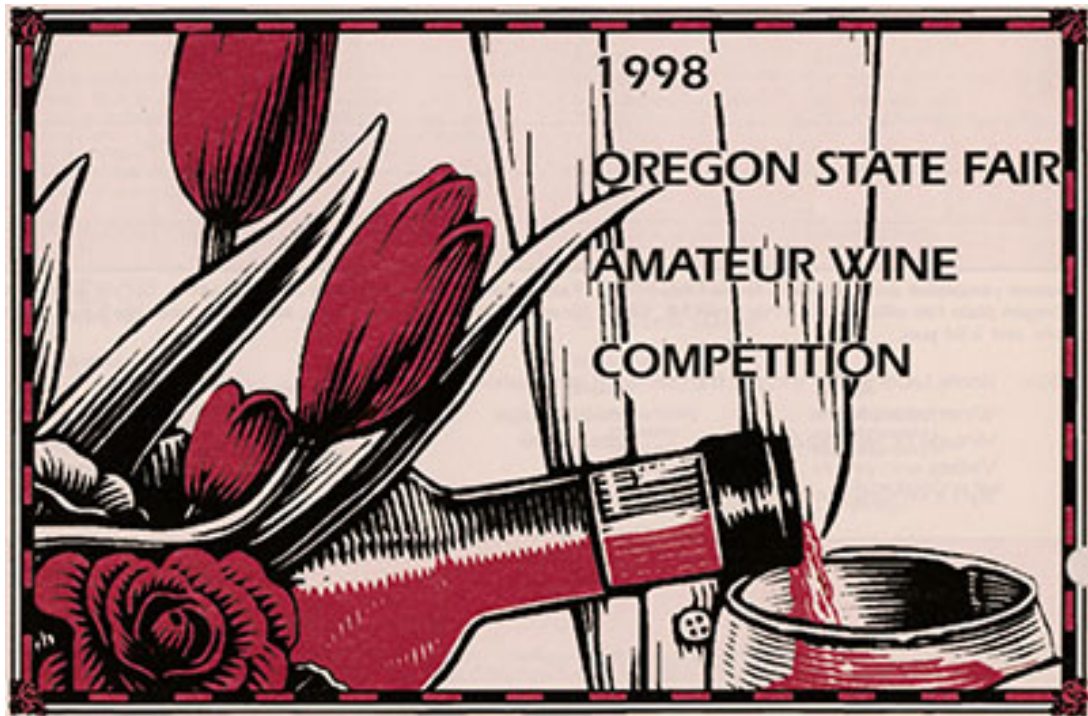
Almost like a sweet Trivial Pursuit game, Frank gave a running stream of chocolate facts between bites.

It is a \$12 billion annual business in the United States and is growing at 15 percent a year, he said. In all forms, Americans eat an average of 18.7 pounds of chocolate each per year. That compares to the world's top chocolate consumers, the Swiss, at 22 pounds per person per year.

To last the longest, cakes should be stored in a cool, dry space. When wrapped in plastic in the refrigerator, a cake will keep for more than two weeks, he said.

Frank said that daily swims and long walks help him to stay trim, despite being a chocolate freak.





A graphic advertises the Amateur Wine Competition at the 1998 State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



The 1979 Grand National Lumberjack Championships and a special Fireworks Display were two new features at the 1979 Oregon State Fair. Contestants from throughout the world competed in logging sports competition September 2 and 3, and a giant fireworks display closed the 1979 Fair.

Competitors race to saw through a log in the shortest time during the 1979 Grand National Lumberjack Championships at the State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)

(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Contests

### Wonderful and Wacky Competition

People will do some pretty strange things in the name of competition. Life in general and reality television in specific provide ample evidence of that. The Waffle Dog Eating Contest shown below is just another prime example. Here are more images highlighting competition at the State Fair.



Left: An advertisement announces the Waffle Dog Eating Contest at the State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records) Right: Seventeen-year-old Russell Grelinger of Salem wins the 1979 Waffle Dog Eating Contest at the State Fair by consuming 11.5 of the batter wrapped hot dogs in the timed event. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)





Boys compete in the 1974 Pie Eating Contest at the State Fair as Ronald McDonald calls the play by play. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)



Competitors race to get the most milk from their cow in the allotted time during the Cow Milking Contest at the State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)



Girls prepare to compete in the Watermelon Eating Contest at the State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)

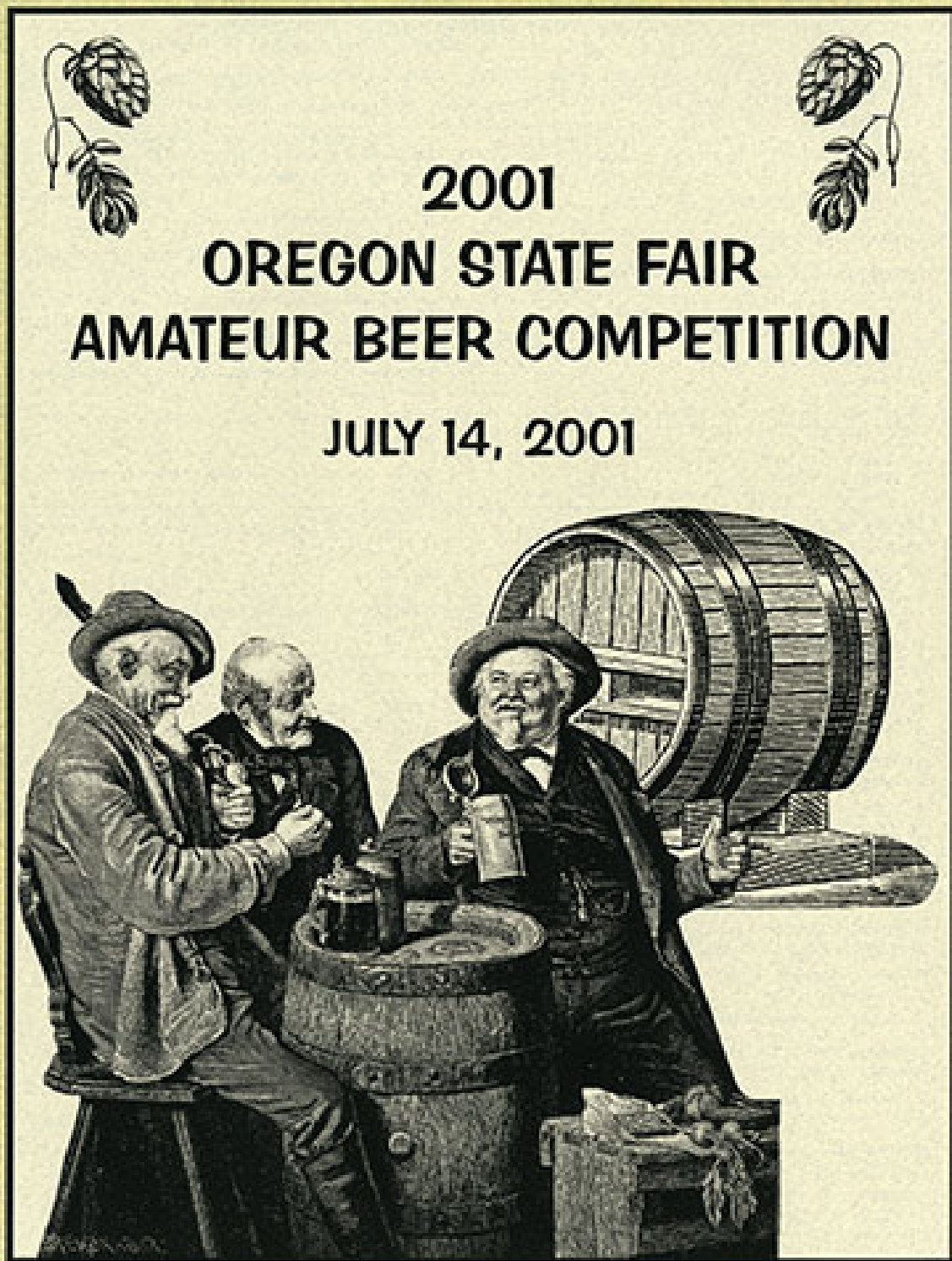


A 4-H boy holds the ribbons for his champion cow in a 1997 livestock competition at the State Fair. The winning cow seems most interested in licking the ribbons. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)





Red Riding Hood and her dressed up pet "wolf" team up as 4-H contestants in the Dress-up Dog Competition in the 1979 State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



This nostalgic artwork advertises the Amateur Beer Competition at the 2001 State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)





Women view quilts entered in a Home Economics Contest at the 1970 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)

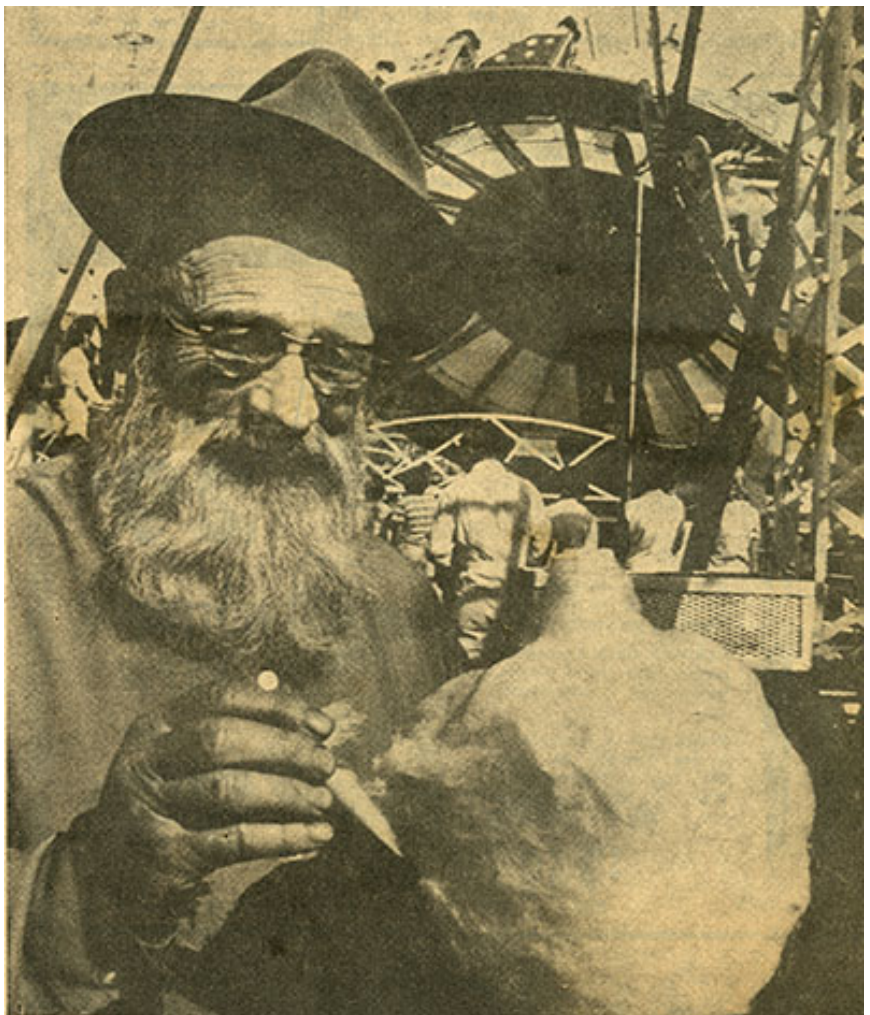
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## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Fabulous Food

### A Fair Without Food? Unthinkable!

What would the State Fair be without food? That's unthinkable and fairgoers seem to agree. While nutritionists may cringe at many of the foods served, fairgoers think it's worth the splurge to get the whole State Fair experience. They consume food at the fair in prodigious quantities. For example, in 1962, officials estimated that in the course of nine days at the fair, the public would consume approximately 95,000 pounds of meat. Of the total amount, 40,000 pounds would be ground into hamburger and the rest would be served in hot dogs, steaks, and other cuts. The Bakery estimated it would use 18,000 dozen burger buns; 3,200 dozen hot dog rolls, 3,500 large loaves of bread, and 600 dozen doughnuts would be consumed. The fair evolved over the years to match the tastes of those attending. Thus, in 1983 the State Fair opened 11 new restaurants in an area called "The International Food Fair." Featured entrees included pizza, Irish baked potatoes, Swedish Pastry, and Mandarin Chinese. Still, by 2003, the most popular food at the fair was the common hamburger!

Proving that the State Fair is for the young at heart, 70-year-old Efin Podgornoff of Gervais enjoys cotton candy at the 1964 fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records, Scrapbook)







While this guy holds a slice of pizza at the 1985 State Fair, he appears to be all ham. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



Oregon Governor Mark Hatfield's children, Elizabeth, 5 and Mark Jr., 4, take time out for an ice cream refreshment break during opening ceremonies at the Oregon State Fair in Salem. Pretty Linda Jean Schild, 1944-45 Oregon Dairy Princess, also gave ice cream treats to several hundred people who turned out to watch Gov. Hatfield and other dignitaries officially open the state's big show for 1964.

Oregon Governor Mark Hatfield's children, Mark Jr., 4, and Elizabeth, 5, enjoy some ice cream with Oregon Dairy Princess Linda Jean Schild at the 1964 State Fair.(Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records, Scrapbook)



## SANDWICHES

JUMBO HAMBURGER	65
Includes Lettuce, Relish, Mayonnaise, Dill Pickle, Onion if you wish, on Toasted Bun	
CHEESEBURGER	75
FRENCH DIP, Au Jus	1.35
BEEF	85
HAM	85
HOT DOG	30
TUNA	65

## Hot Dinner Sandwiches and Luncheons

HOT OREGON TURKEY SANDWICH	1.35
Potatoes and Gravy	
HOT DINNER SANDWICH, Ham or Beef	1.35
Includes Mashed or French Fried Potatoes and Gravy	
HAMBURGER STEAK	1.35
French Fries, Toasted Bun	
HAMBURGER STEAK	1.35
Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Toasted Bun	
HAMBURGER STEAK	1.35
Spanish Sauce, French Fries, Toasted Bun	
HAMBURGER STEAK	1.35
With Chili Beans, Chopped Onion, Toasted Bun	

## READY TO SERVE

OVEN BAKED BEANS	65
KOSHER STYLE FRANKFURTER & BEANS	1.35
CHILI CON CARNIE	65
SPAGHETTI with Spanish Sauce	85
SPAGHETTI with Parmesan Cheese	85
SIDE FRENCH FRIES	30
SIDE FRENCH FRIES with Gravy	40
TOASTED BUN	15

## SALADS

CHEF'S SPECIAL	
Tossed Green Topped with Ham and Turkey Toasted Bun	
	1.50

TOMATO DELIGHT	
Stuffed Tomato With Chicken or Tuna Salad	
	1.10

COTTAGE CHEESE	
With Choice of Pineapple — Peach — Pear	
	75

STATE FAIR SPECIAL	
Twinette Combination Chicken Salad and Tuna Salad Garnished with Hard Boiled Egg and Tomato	
	1.50

FRUIT SALAD	
Topped with Whip Cream	
	25

SHRIMP BOWL	
Fresh Shrimp Meat over Crisp Chopped Lettuce, 1,000 Island Dressing	
	1.50

CRAB BOWL	
Fresh Crab Meat over Crisp Chopped Lettuce, 1,000 Island Dressing	
	1.10

## SIDE OF SALAD

SMALL TOSSED SALAD	50
HEAD LETTUCE	50
SIDE OF POTATO SALAD	50
SIDE OF COTTAGE CHEESE	30
JELLO SALAD	40
DUTCH COLE SLAW	40
Choice of Mayonnaise, French, 1,000 Island or Blu Cheese Dressing	

MINIMUM TABLE SERVICE — 25c PER PERSON

## FOUNTAIN

FRESHLY FROZEN SOFT ICE CREAM	25
ICE CREAM, Vanilla, Chocolate, or Strawberry	25

## Sodas and Milk Shakes

POPULAR FLAVORS	40
-----------------	----

## DRINKS

ORANGE ADE	ROOT BEER
COCA COLA	7 UP
PEPSI COLA	

## SUNDAES

Served on Freshly Frozen Ice Cream  
with Chopped Nuts

CHOCOLATE, CRUSHED PINEAPPLE, STRAWBERRY	50
MARSHMALLOW DELIGHT	65
BANANA SPLIT	75
BLACK AND WHITE	85

## DESSERTS

BRADLEYS FAMOUS PIES, per cut	30
PIE ALAMODE, per cut	45
JELLO	40
CHOCOLATE CAKE per cut	30
CAKE ALAMODE, per cut	45

## BEVERAGES

COFFEE	20	ICE COLD MILK	20
TEA		ICE COLD	
ICE TEA	20	BUTTERMILK	20
ORANGE JUICE	20	TOMATO JUICE	25
		GRAPEFRUIT JUICE	25

This 1967 menu for John Boston's Concession Stand at the State Fair offers a jumbo hamburger and a slice of pie for under a buck. That leaves a nickel for a tip.  
(Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



St. Vincent de Paul Snack Shop Prices-- L971

Milk 25 ¢  
Coffee 15 ¢ No charge for refills  
Soft Drinks--small 15 ¢ Large 25 ¢  
Ice Cream 25 ¢ slice  
Pie 30 ¢ piece  
Ala Mode 55 ¢  
Whole Pie \$1.25  
Hot Dogs 40 ¢  
Chili Dogs 50 ¢  
Hamburgers 65 ¢ Cheese Burgers 75 ¢  
Delux Burger 75 ¢  
Doughnuts 10 ¢ - \$1.00 Dz.  
Chili 60 ¢  
Special of the Day 75 ¢

Include: Turkey and noodles--Clam Chowder--Spaghetti--Lima Beans & Ham  
Mashed Potatoes with Turkey gravy

Salads

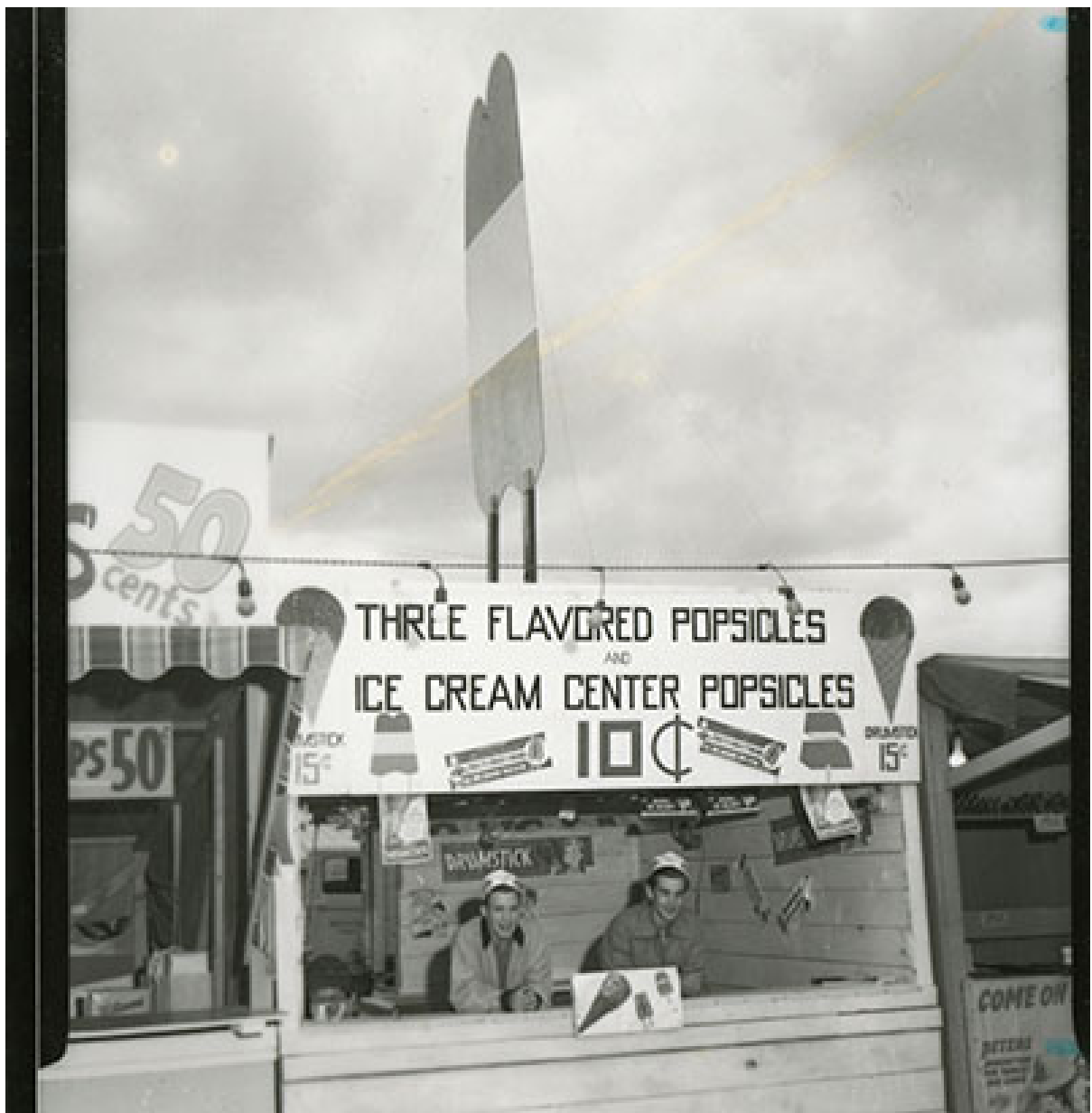
Potato - 40 ¢---Plain Cottage Cheese 30 ¢--Cottage Cheese and Fruit 40 ¢  
Toss Green -- 35 ¢

Bq. Ham on Bun 75 ¢  
Plain Ham 65 ¢  
Cold Ham 65 ¢  
Ham and Cheese 75 ¢  
Cheese 50 ¢  
Peanut Butter & Jelly 30 ¢  
Tuna Fish 50 ¢  
Egg Salad 40 ¢





This undated shot shows crowds at the State Fair food booths to the right. The Grandstands are to the left.(Oregon State Archives)



If you have ever heard the saying "let's blow this popsicle stand," this is the place to do it at the State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



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## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Fabulous Food



An original Chef's Inn sign at the State Fair. (Courtesy June Bowersox)


### Chef's Inn

Located near the entrance to the racetrack, "Restaurant Row" was constructed circa 1939. Unlike the food fair booths of today, "Restaurant Row" consisted of open air structures that gave hungry fairgoers the option to either sit down or get take out. One of these restaurants, was locally owned Chef's Inn. Founded in 1948 by Joe Bowersox, Sr., Chef's Inn served fairgoers for almost three decades. They were widely known for their signature "Fair Burger" and THAT GOOD COFFEE!

### Listen to Memories

Listen to family members associated with the Chef's Inn reminisce...

[Chef's Inn memories](#) (9:36) 

[Restaurant Row memories](#) (10:04) 

[Work at the fair and State Fair memories generally](#) (9:35) 

Family members include June Bowersox, Joe Bowersox, III, Berneice Bowersox Franz, and Larry Franz.



The Chef's Inn kitchen at the State Fair.  
(Courtesy June Bowersox)



Chef's Inn Joe and a monkey entertain crowds in front of the Chef's Inn circa 1974 along Restaurant Row at the State Fair. (Courtesy June Bowersox)





This circa early 1950s vintage photo shows a bustling Chef's Inn. (Courtesy June Bowersox)



This circa early 1970s photo shows the scene in front of the Chef's Inn at the State Fair. (Courtesy June Bowersox)

1974

C H E F ' S   I N N

SPECIAL

Hot Beef Dinner Sandwich	
Mashed Potatoes, Brown Gravy & *TOD	1.75
Hot Turkey Dinner Sandwich	
Mashed Potatoes, Giblet Gravy & *TOD	1.75
Chili Burger	1.15
Chili Dog	1.15

DINNERS

Baked Ham with Pineapple Ring	2.95
Roast Beef	2.95
Hamburger Steak	2.45

Includes: Salad, mashed potatoes, vegetable  
bread, and butter. \*TOD

SANDWICHES

DeLuxe Hamburger	.95
DeLuxe Hot Dog, Foot Long	.85
Ham, Beef, or Turkey	1.00

SALADS

Cottage Cheese with Pineapple	.60
Potato Salad	.50
Cole Slaw	.50

DESSERT

Pie	.50
-----	-----

DRINKS

Pepsi-cola, Orange & 7-Up	.25
Ice Cold Milk	.25
* THAT GOOD COFFEE	.20

This 1974 Chef's Inn menu from the State Fair offers a deluxe hamburger at just 95¢.  
(Courtesy June Bowersox)





Salem dentist Dr. Landy Franz and son Landy James work in the kitchen of the Chef's Inn at the State Fair in 1974. (Courtesy June Bowersox)





(Gerry Lewin photo)

Franz and son feed Fairgoers

## He gets pooped, but he enjoys it

By **BOB PFOHMAN**  
Capital Journal Regional Editor

Every year at State Fair time, Salem dentist Dr. Landy Franz puts aside his drills and probes, dons a white apron, grabs a spatula and heads out to "restaurant row" along the midway.

There for 10 hectic days, he cooks thousands of hamburgers and hot dogs for Fairgoers from behind the counter at Chef's Inn, one of 14 restaurants lined up perpendicular to the entrance of the race track.

This is the 28th year for Dr. Franz, son-in-law of the late Joe Bowersox, original founder of Chef's, one of the last locally-owned family restaurants at the Fair.

It's a grueling routine, working from 8 a.m. until midnight every day, he says.

luncheon crush. He manages the place with his brother-in-law, Joe Bowersox Jr., principal at Middle Grove elementary school on Silverton Road. Their families work together at the joint project each year to earn money for school. The kids' school friends also are hired to help out as waitresses and busboys.

Franz has been returning to the Fair every year, coaxing the obsolescent equipment into putting out for just another year, all the time hoping that the State Fair Commission will demolish restaurant row and build replacements. Franz hopes to keep his place and open a new restaurant.

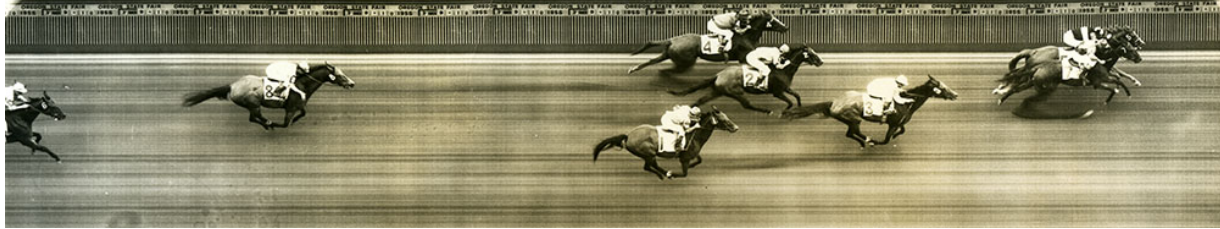
Being a fry cook at Chef's has some advantages: He has a ringside seat to look at the pretty girls as well as to greet friends.

But business has been slow this



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## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Horse Racing



Horses and riders streak across the racing track at the State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)

### The Sport of Kings

Fairgoers loved horse racing, and betting on the horse racing, from the earliest years of the State Fair. A lot changed in the decades after the state took over operations of the fair in 1885. In 1893 fair officials spent less than \$11,000 to build the original Grandstand, overlooking the new mile-long oval horse racing track. It was rebuilt in 1929 to accommodate 6,500 people at a cost of \$150,000 (over 2 million dollars in today's money). The Grandstand was condemned in the 1980s leading to the end of horse racing at the State Fair. The structure was demolished in 2002 and the Pavillion was built in its place two years later. Variations on horse racing also thrived over the years, including jump racing and harness racing. One thing that didn't change was a tradition of giving race horses silly names, such as Gamblewithus, Flamethower, Lady Wholloper, Mischievous Miss, Dr. Elmo and Flashy Chap.



Spectators crowd the newly expanded Grandstand to watch horse racing at the 1929 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)



Horses and jockeys race at the 1946 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, Agriculture Department Photos)



Mrs. C.J. Creighton shows her Shetland harness pony at a circa 1940s State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)





Horses and jockeys are at the gate and ready for the start of the race at this circa 1980 State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



A man and a woman pose with a horse at the circa 1950 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)





Mrs. Howard Gass jumps her horse, Country Bumpkin, at the State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)

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## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Horse Racing

### Photo Finishes and Female Pioneers

Photography was first used to determine winning racehorses in 1937. On opening day of the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club, owner, Bing Crosby, brought in Paramount Pictures motion picture engineer's (Lorenzo Del Riccio) invention of the circular flow camera to photograph the finish. Del Riccio's invention was improved upon in 1948 by Bertram Pearl, and became more widely used as a way of determining winners of races. A race at the 1952 State Fair provides a textbook example of a photo finish below.

Jockeying has historically been a sport for men and for most of the history of horse racing at the State Fair, it was exclusively a male domain. But by the 1970s, several young women had joined the fray to become lead jockeys. Cindy Kirby (below right) was one of these women. She was featured in a *Sports Illustrated* magazine article in November, 1973 listing her numerous wins and earning the coveted title of lead jockey.



The horse at the top  
"wins by a  
nose" (across the  
white vertical line)  
in a photo finish  
race during the 1952  
State Fair. (Oregon  
State Archives,  
Oregon Fair  
Exposition Center)





"APPALOOSA PURSE"

OREGON STATE FAIR		Sept. 1, 1975	
3rd Race	5½ Furlongs		
Winner	THUNDER ROLLING	2nd	Battle Call
Owner -	John Beck	3rd	Chanta-Lea Lady
Jockey	Cindy Kirby	Trainer -	Wayne Rottweiler
		Time	1:13-2

Horse jockey Cindy Kirby wins accolades while racing at the 1975 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, Oregon Fair Exposition Center)

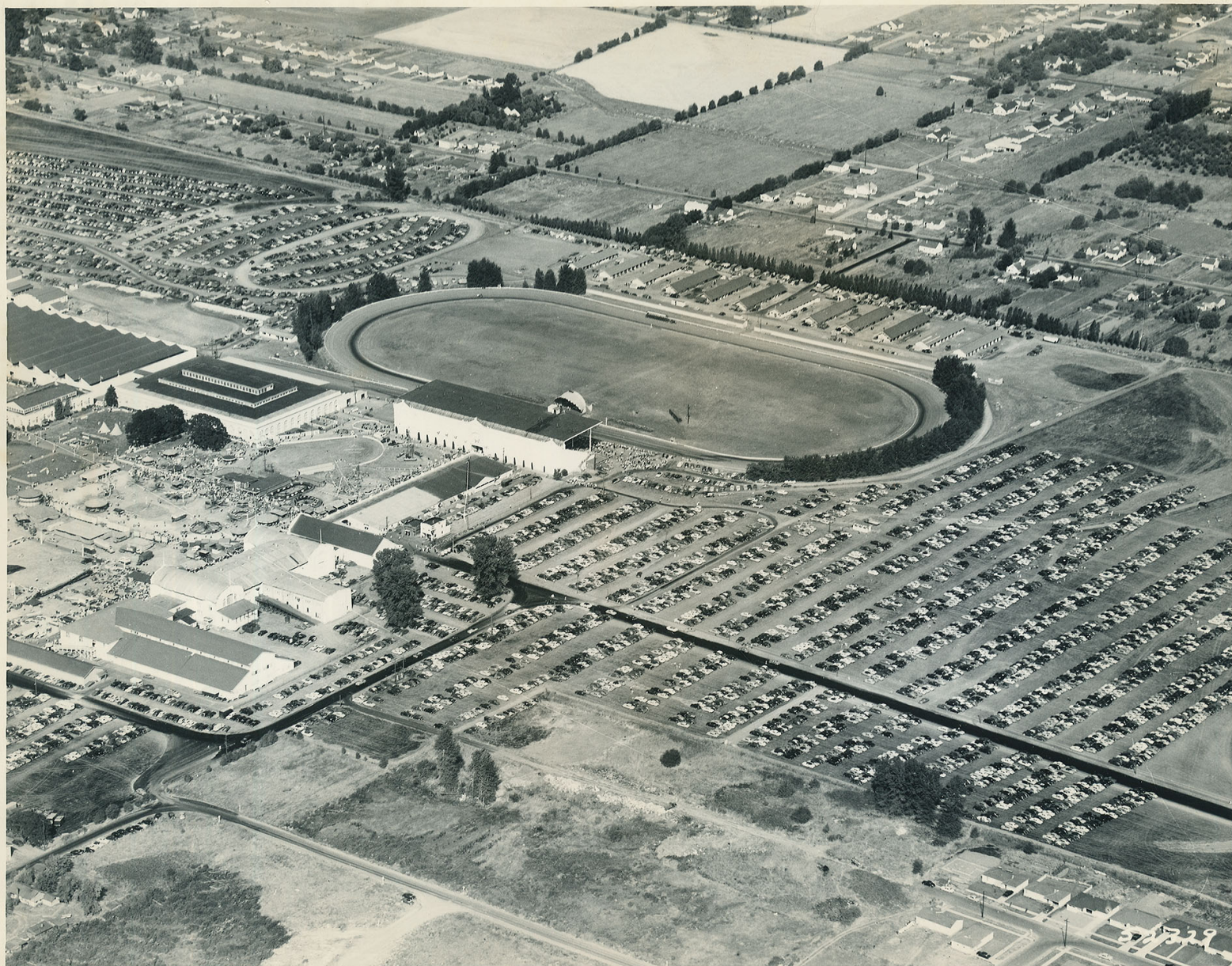


Horses parade on the race track in front of the Grandstand at this circa 1920s State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



A horse and jockey race past the Grandstand during the 1976 State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)





The horse racing track and Grandstand stand out in this circa 1950s aerial shot of the State Fair.  
(Oregon State Archives, Oregon Fair Exposition Center)





The race track and Grandstand were used for more than just horse racing. Here, the Formal Guard Mount, complete with bagpipers, perform on the track in front of the Grandstand circa 1950. (Oregon State Archives, Oregon Fair Exposition Center)



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## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Entertainment



This graphic header on promotional literature advertises for Jimmy Martin's Hell Show and Congress of Death Dodgers, one of many outrageous acts making the state fair circuit in the mid-1900s. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)

### Decisions, Decisions

Fairgoers expect to be entertained. And over the decades, many world-class acts have performed at the State Fair. But before they can perform, they have to be booked. Negotiations are necessary to set the compensation and contract terms. Between Grammy nominated artists and musical groups, unique animal routines (waltzing lions), electrical performances or death-defying acts, State Fair managers have hard decisions to make. Their choices can make the difference between crowds of happy fairgoers and pools of red ink for the fair. Showcased here are some of the hundreds of inquiries annually sent to the State Fair. Which acts would you choose?



Stunt riders each straddle two horses as they jump a Buick convertible. The daring team was part of the Hendricks Family Act that vied for an entertainment spot at the 1950 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)

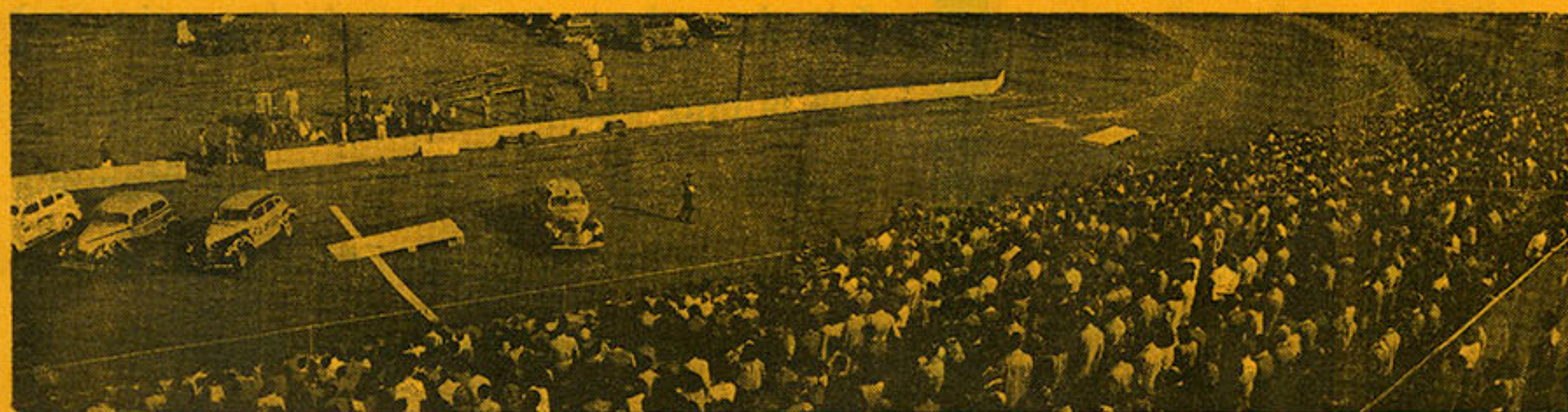


A member of Jimmy Martin's Hell Show and Congress of Death Dodgers is run over by a 2.5 ton truck with "only the protection of his bathing trunks." The image is part of 1948 promotional literature designed to secure bookings at state fairs and other similar venues. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)



# Presenting Jimmy Martin's

## HELL SHOW



Many Events Originated and Presented Only by Jimmy Martin and His Motor Maniac Stunt Kings

## NATIONAL CHAMPION DAREDEVILS



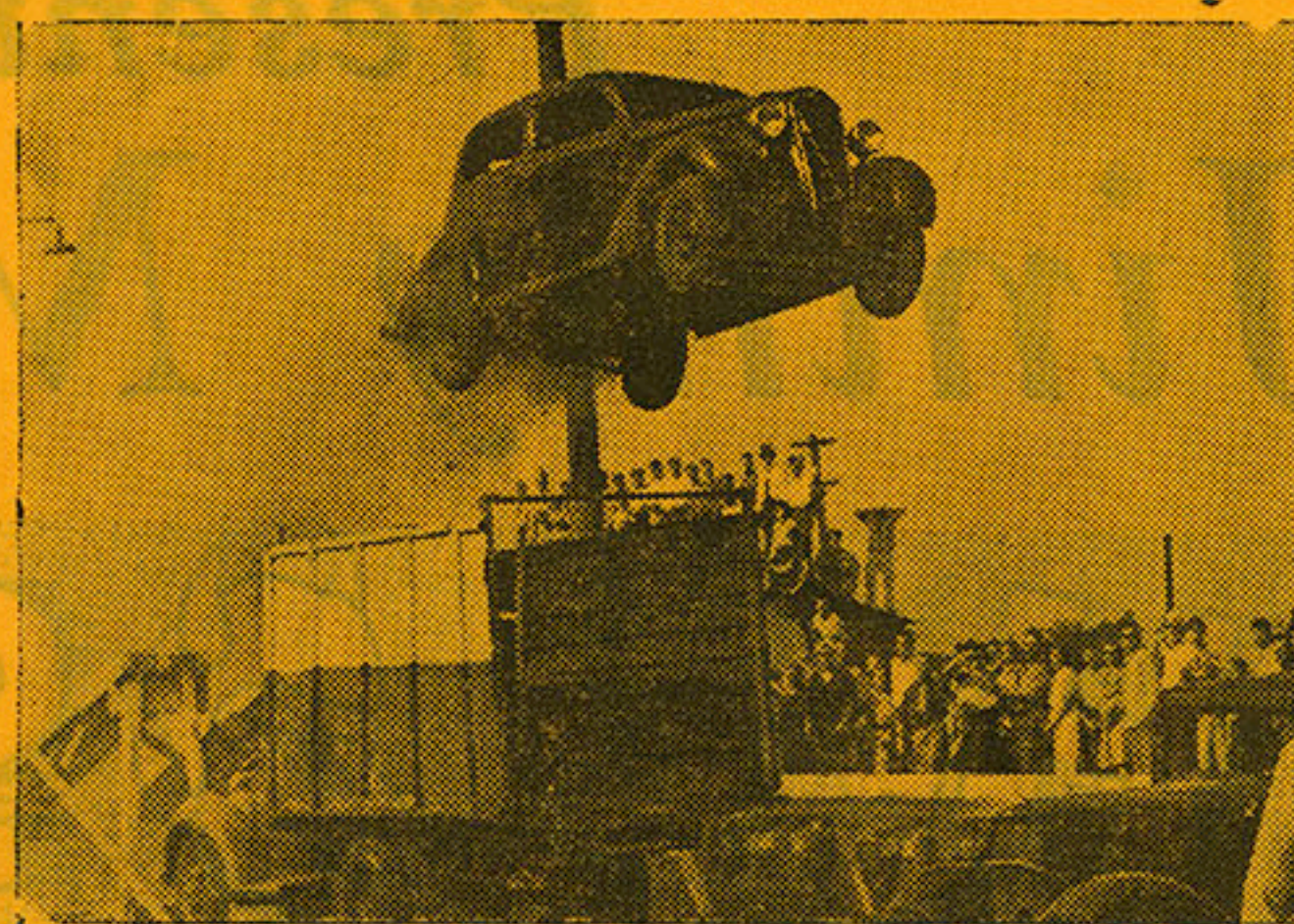
## Congress of Death Dodgers

2 Solid Hour Program of 20 Spectacular Death - Defying Events



### Jimmy Martin, NOW KING

of the stunt men, learned many new ways of crashing and stunting automobiles, from years testing cars at Eastern manufacturers proving grounds, and testing army experimental vehicles for combat use.

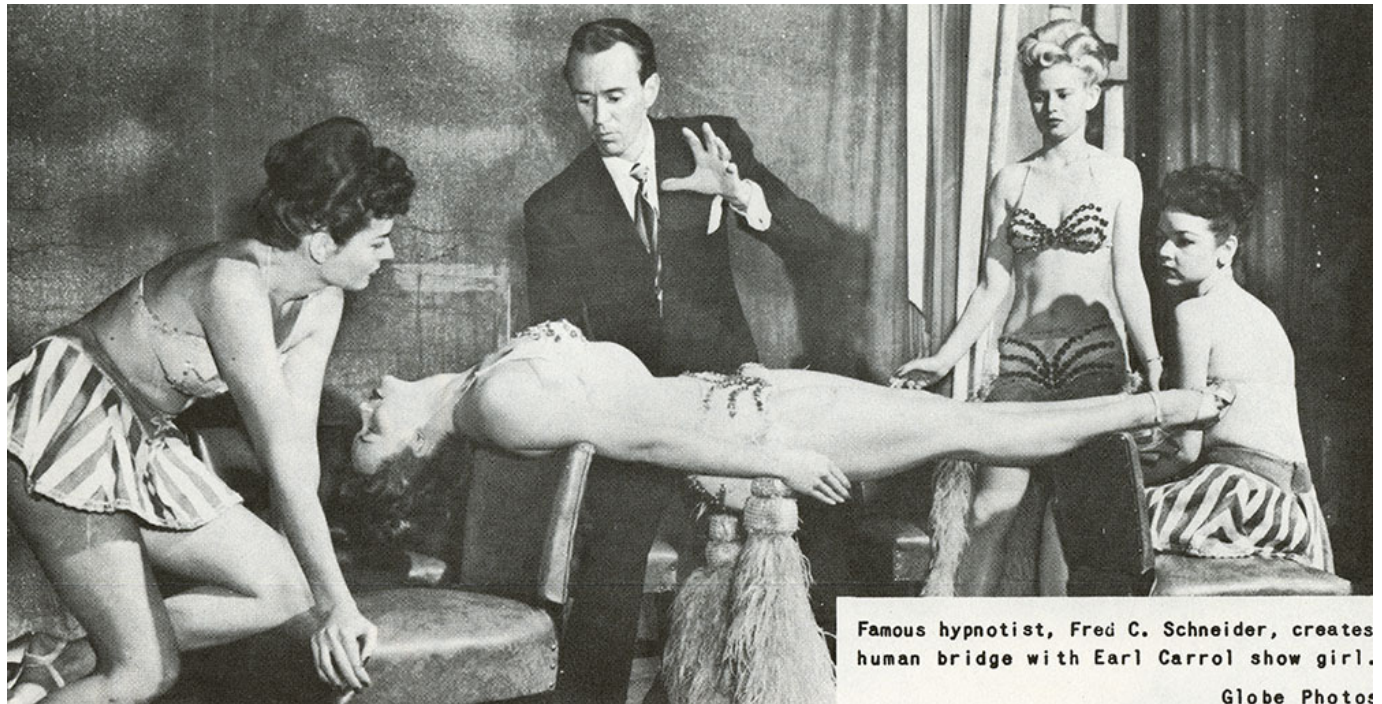


Jumping a huge truck or a transcontinental bus is only one of the outstanding feature attractions of the famous Jimmy Martin's Hell Show, and Congress of Daredevil Death Dodgers... a full two hour program of spell-binding events.



Man run over with heavy 2½ ton truck, actually takes the weight and impact with only the protection of his bathing trunks.



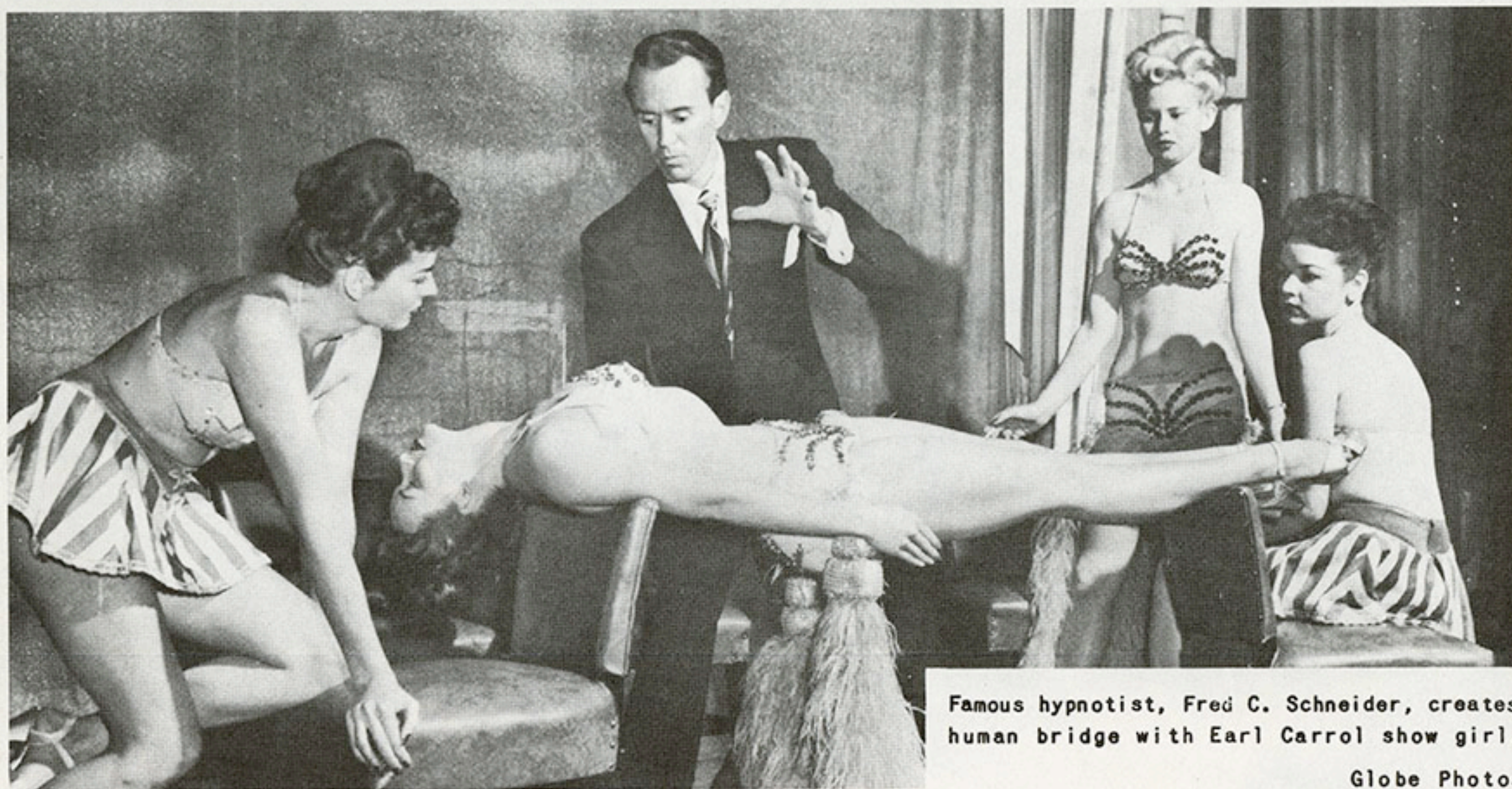


Famous hypnotist, Fred C. Schneider, creates human bridge with Earl Carrol show girl.

Globe Photos

Hypnotist Fred C. Schneider creates a "human bridge" with a show girl during his act. The image is from a circa 1950 promotional flyer sent to the State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)





Famous hypnotist, Fred C. Schneider, creates human bridge with Earl Carroll show girl.

Globe Photos

**SCHNEIDER MYSTIFIES, ASTONISHES AND ENTERTAINS...**his show is exciting, educational, and humorous...yet always in good taste. Schneider is an acknowledged authority, and master in the field of hypnosis and mentalism.

**WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?...**Think of a number, take a line from a book, name of a song, etc., he tells you what it is. Schneider calls spectators by name, gives their birthdates, addresses, and answers their questions.

**SCHNEIDER KNOWS...**under careful guard in a sealed room, he can describe in detail, the actions of spectators in another room, select cards, objects, etc.

**X-RAY EYES...**hide an object on your person and from the stage, blindfolded, and with a metal water pail over his head, he tells what it is and where it's hidden.

**MEMORY AND MENTAL WIZARD...**he has photographic mind. Memorizes a full page in one second. The current evening paper or a popular magazine may be submitted. The spectators may ask questions from all the pages, and Schneider answers with amazing accuracy.

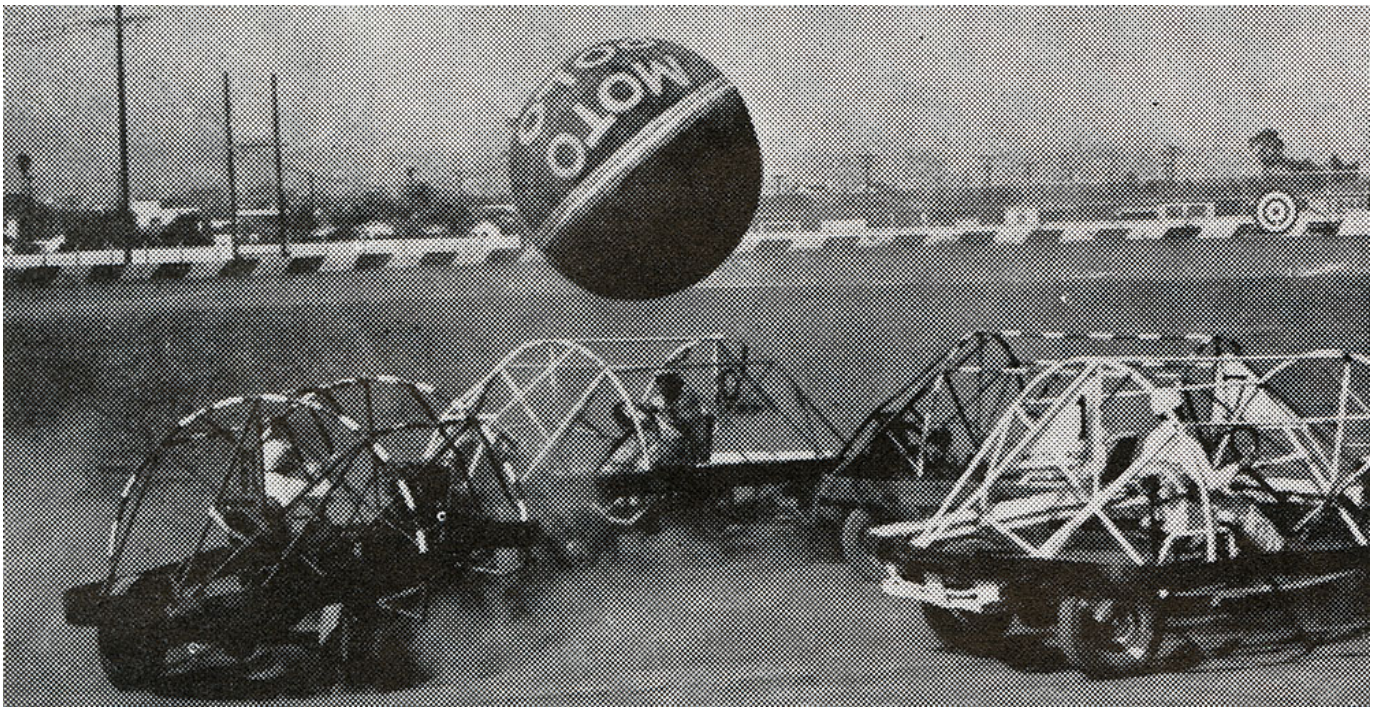
**SCHNEIDER'S** entertainment is new and strikingly different. He holds his audience spellbound as he moves from one amazing feat to another.

**SCHNEIDER IS AN AUTHORITY ON HYPNOTISM...**and serves as an advisor for motion pictures. The most recent is "WHIRLPOOL" filmed by 20th Century-Fox Studios. Whirlpool is scheduled for release in 1950.



U. C. L. A. student, hypnotized by Fred Schneider, is unable to remove his hand from chair.



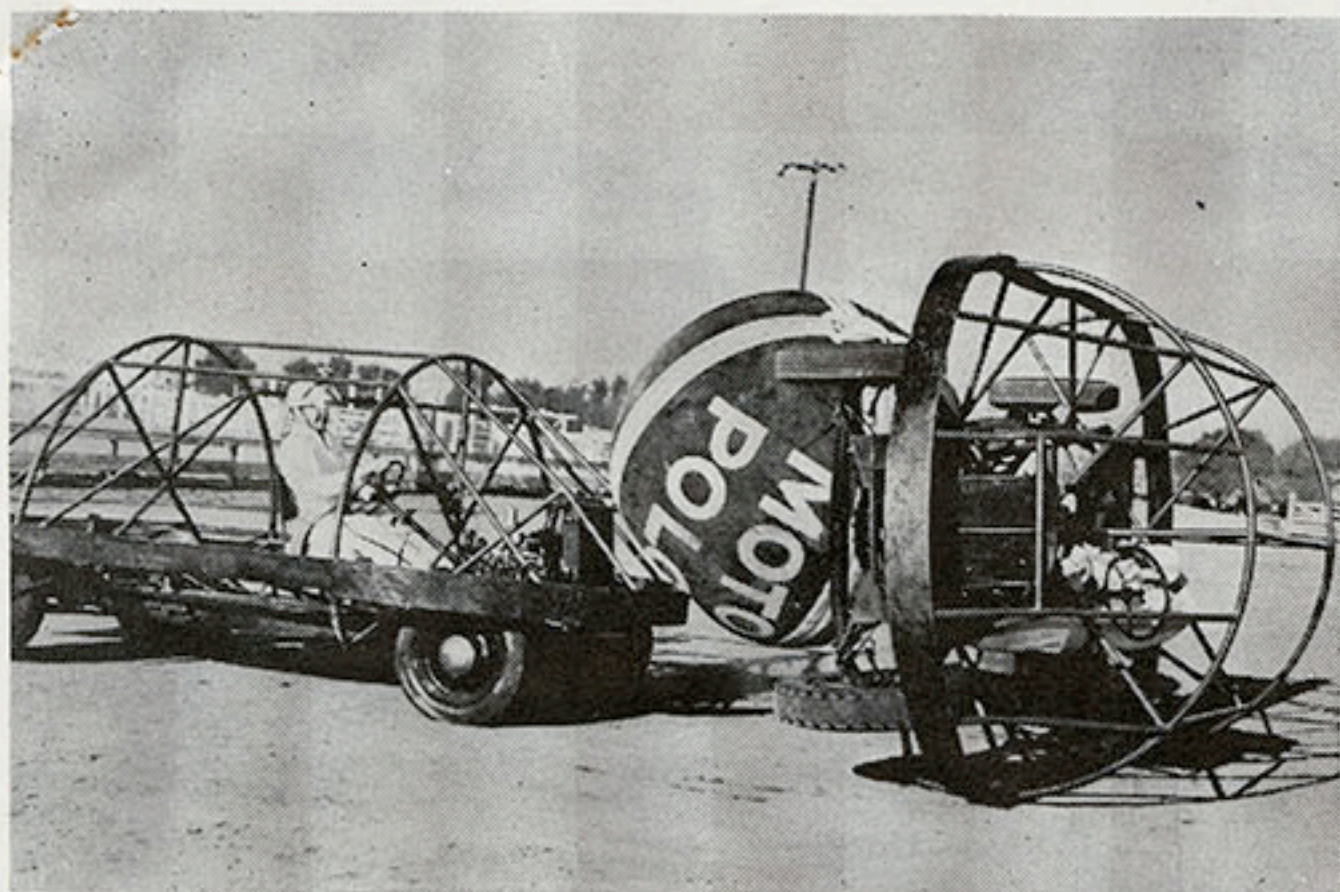


This image from the 195 State Fair shows vehicles playing Moto-Polo with a gigantic ball. The sport, a bizarre variation on polo with horses, featured head-on crashes, cars flying into the air and multiple rollovers. Not for the faint of heart! (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)



The Ice-Arama ice skating troupe poses for a publicity shot. The group offered to bring a mix of "comedy, rhythm, variety, color, action, music and beauty" to the 1956 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)





Combine football, soccer and polo with a dash of Sunday driving and you've got the nation's Newest Sport Thrill of the country . . .



## A RIOT ON WHEELS !

Now you can see the seven-foot "Bongo-Ball" rise high in the air as dare-devil players crash and spill in the Nation's newest thrill sport! The entire last season was played without serious injury despite hair-raising pile-up of cars, roaring head-on collisions, turning over and over, spinning end-over-end, riding over the ball as dare-devil drivers fight for goals—a triumph of modern safety engineering!

**DON'T MISS IT !**

## DON'T TAKE OUR WORD !

"It's not for Sissies"

— Parade Magazine

"Polo on four wheels"

— Popular Mechanics

"A violent and uninhibited form of polo"

— Liberty Magazine

"Hot Rods play Polo"

— Popular Science

"Moto-Polo Mayhem on wheels"

— Mechanix Illustrated

"Indescribable! Collision packed thrills"

— Berlin Neue Jiuistrierte

"Moto-Polo"

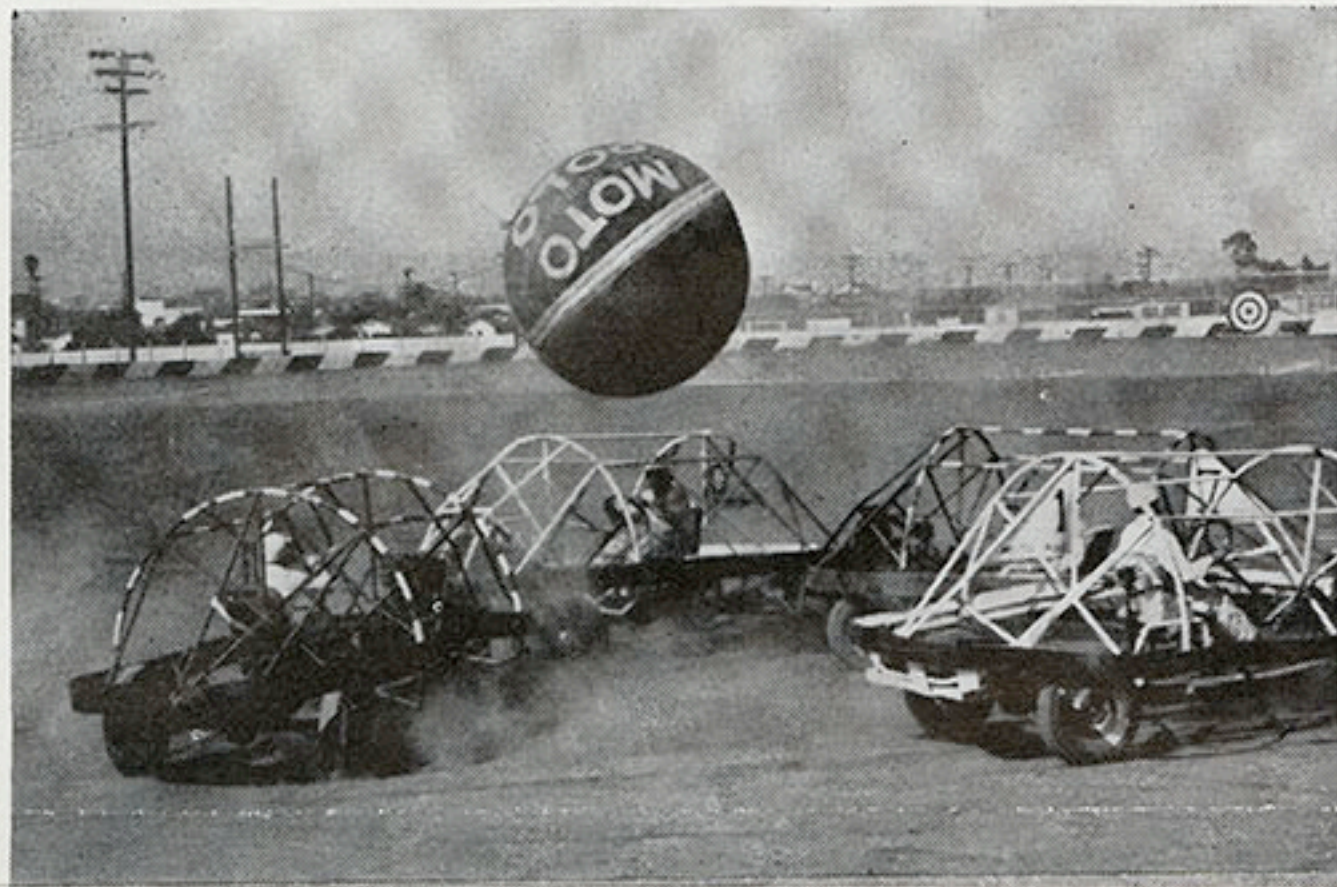
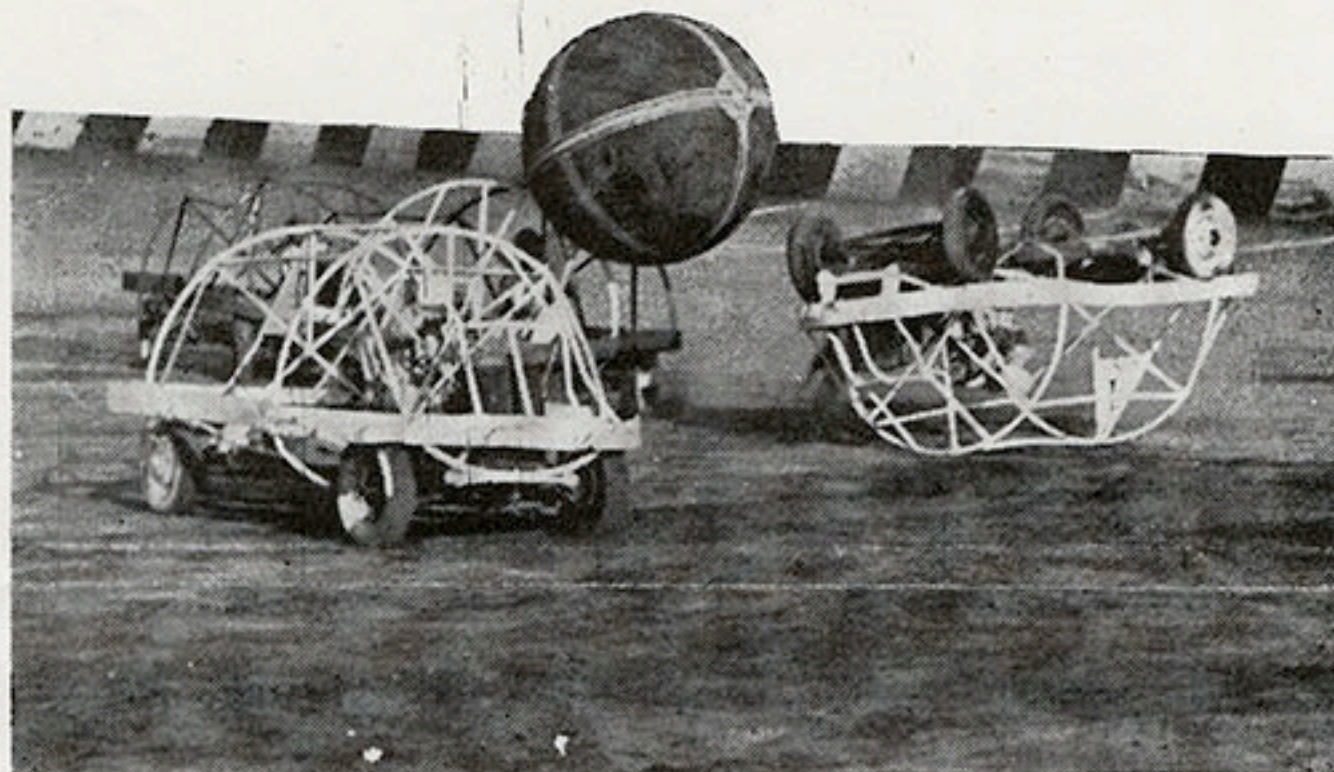
— Tab Magazine

"Two hours of mechanical mayhem"

— London Times

"A phenomenal addition to the American sports scene"

— Television Station KLAC



MOTO-POLO is played with six stripped-down, specially reconstructed "roll-over" cars, three to each side. In addition to roll bars, each bar is equipped with circular bumpers so that when the inevitable crashes occur the cars can be flipped in any direction. Scores are made by advancing a gigantic seven-foot rubber ball through goals at either end of the field. Rules are enforced by a referee, who drives a specially equipped car, complete with signal lights and siren. The siren is used to remove unwilling players from the field. Head-on crashes, cars flying into the air, rolling over and over, at times climbing over the ball . . . are incidents in this rough and tumble game.

MOTO-POLO BALL ESPECIALLY DESIGNED & EXCLUSIVELY  
CONSTRUCTED FOR MOTO-POLO ENTERPRISES BY . . .

# RUBBERCRAFT

Corporation of California

1800 WEST 220TH ST.  
TORRANCE, CALIF.

THE WEST'S  
LEADING

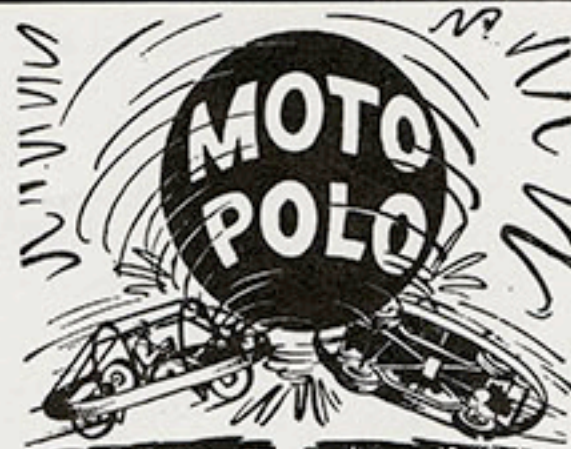
*Craftsmen in Rubber*

**Moto - Polo  
Enterprises**

3408 Shell Drive  
Bakersfield, Calif.

Phone 4-9903

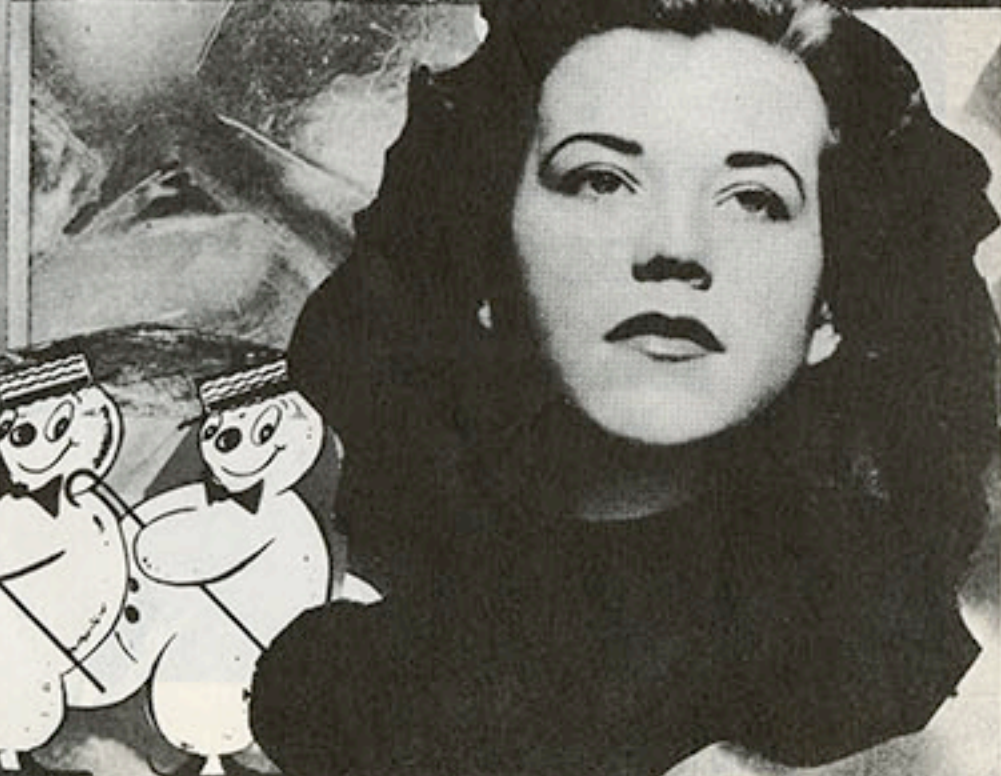
B. J. GOODMAN . . . Owner and Director  
BILL LEDBETTER . . . Manager and Announcer



**FOR OPEN DATES: WIRE, PHONE or WRITE**



# THE ICE-ARAMA LOVELIES



Comedy, rhythm, variety, color, action, music, beauty . . .





Boys climb on an M-4 tank on display at the 1949 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, Oregon Fair Exposition Center)



(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Entertainment

### A Tough Act to Follow

Many of the entertainment acts that came to the State Fair had their roots in vaudeville, which was especially popular in America from the 1880s to the 1930s. Vaudeville acts often featured slapstick comedians, dancers, magicians, acrobats, singers and more in a fast paced riot of entertainment. While vaudeville faded as a separate phenomenon, its influence persisted into the 1970s with popular television variety shows such as the Ed Sullivan Show. And the zany vaudeville style fit in nicely with the culture of the State Fair as well, which already had carnival barkers and bizarre sideshows.



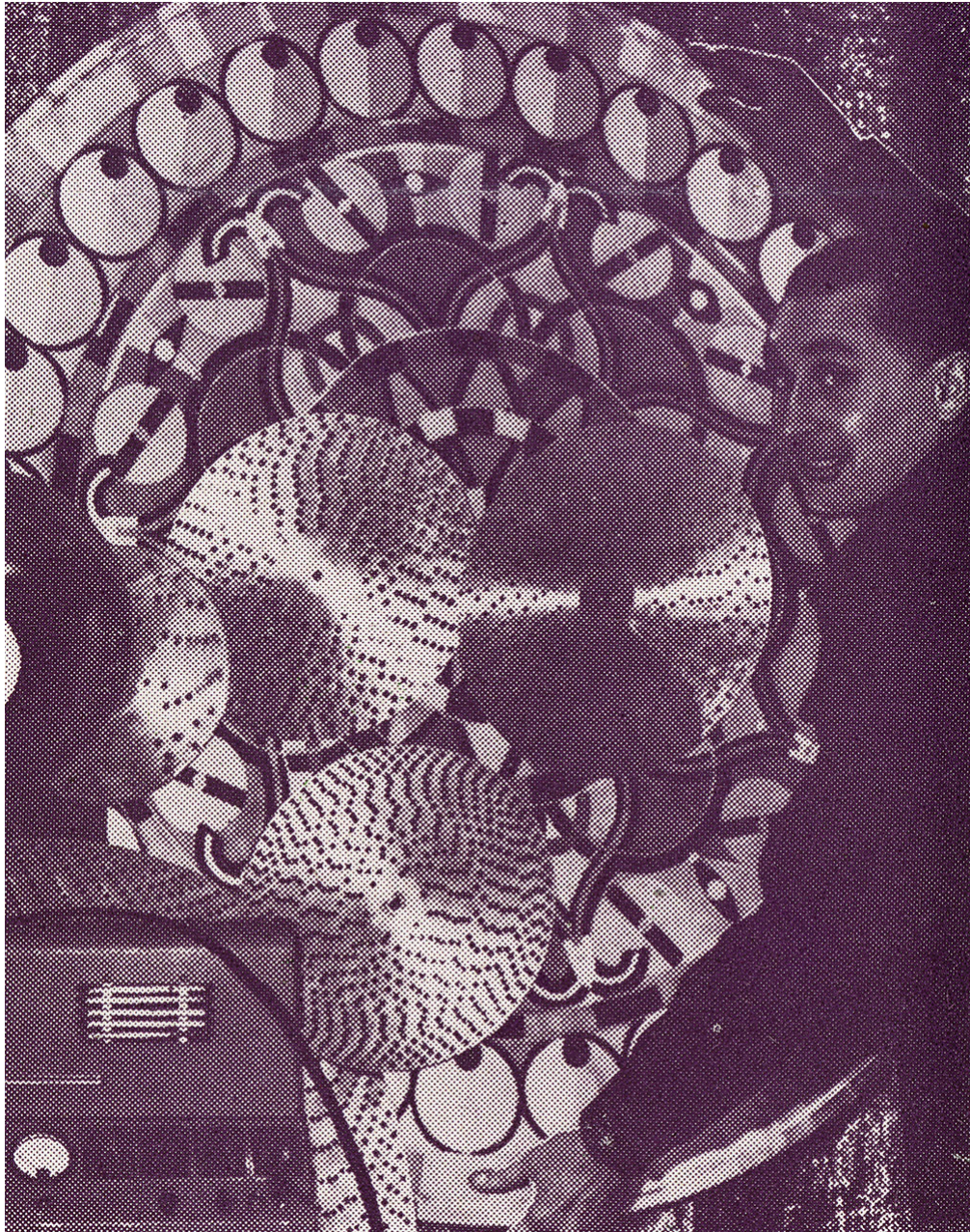
The Three Stooges, a vaudeville, movie and television team active from 1922 to 1970, had open dates in 1948 and hoped to make a stop at the State Fair. Shown above from left are Larry Fine, Shemp Howard and Moe Howard.





A dog balances on a rope during a performance at the 1957 State Fair. Other dogs sit at attention waiting for their routines. (Oregon State Archives, Oregon Fair Exposition Center)

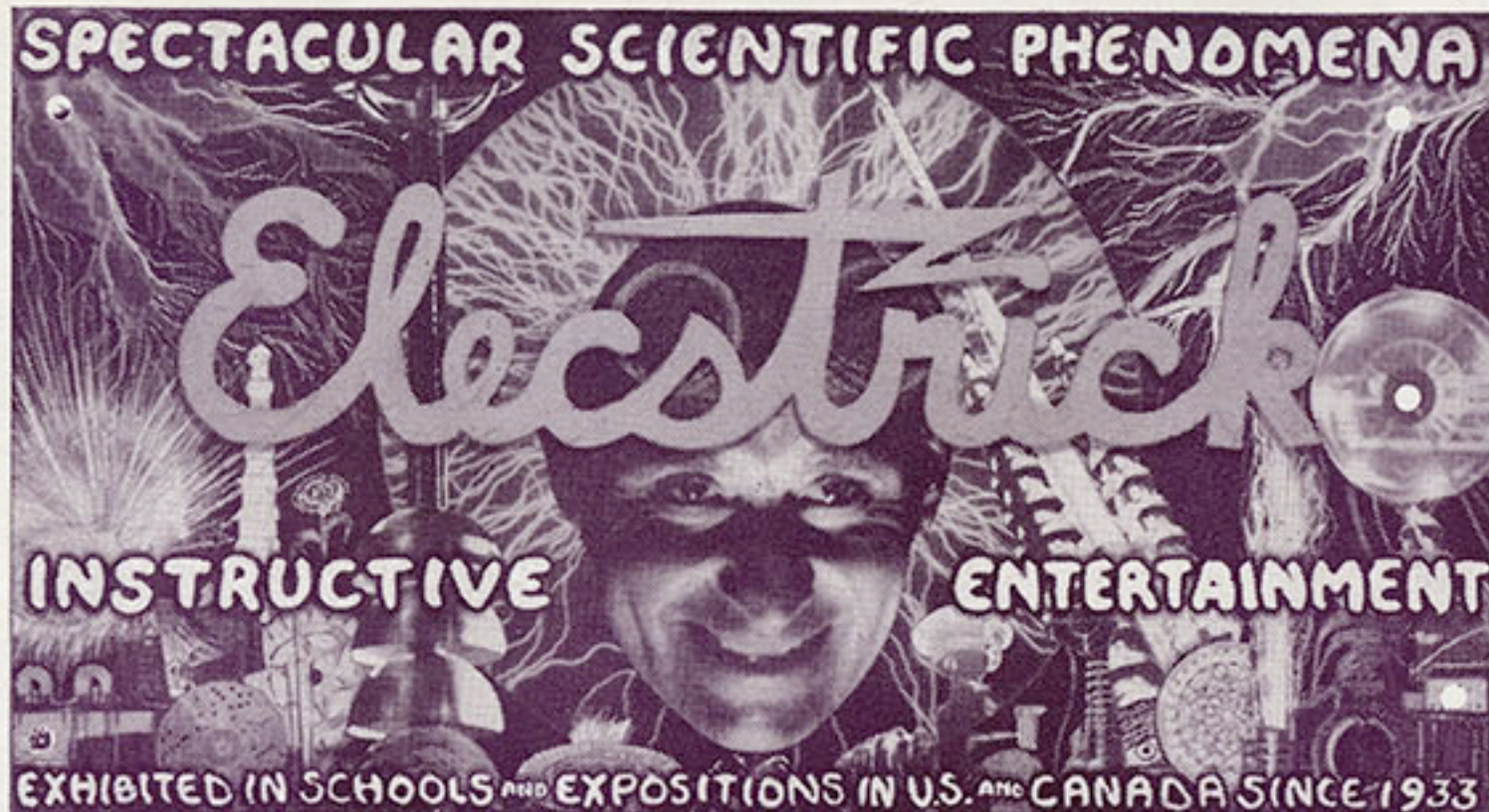




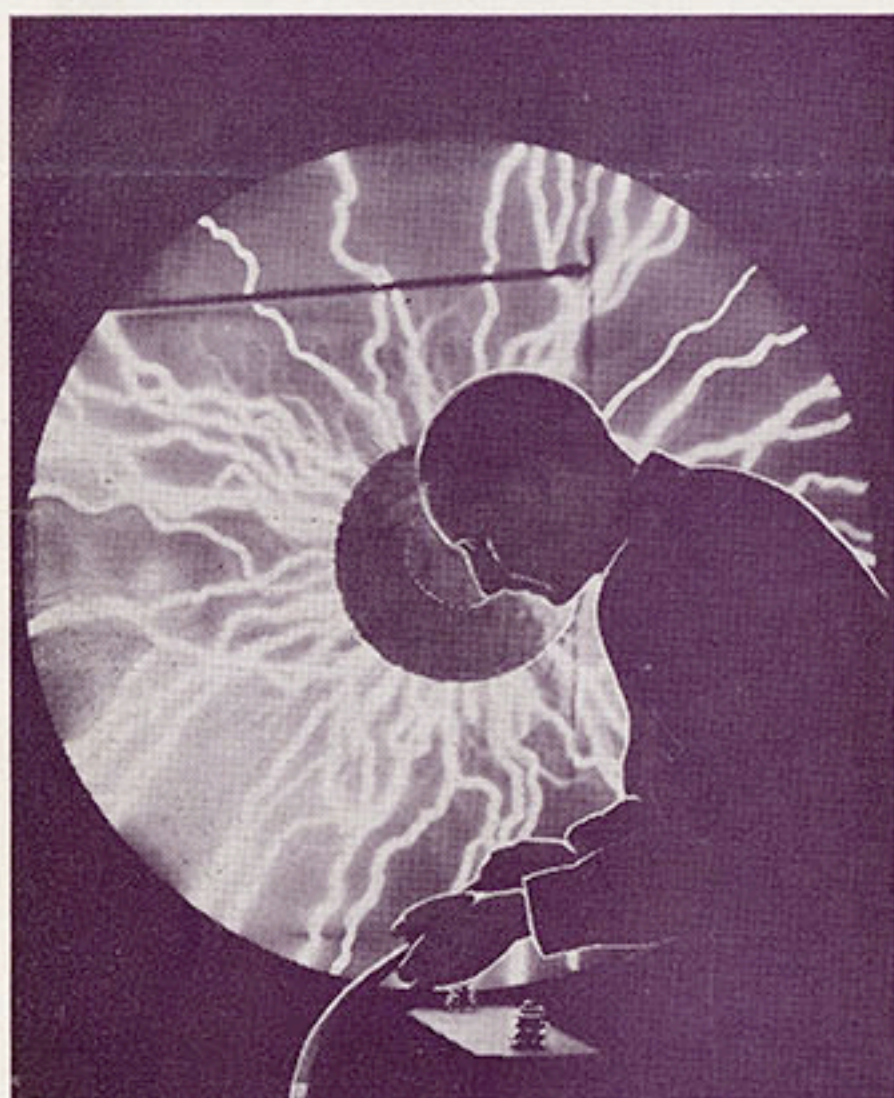
A man plays a "Magna-Stroboscope" during a performance at the 1949 State Fair. This was part of a show called Elecstrick, which showed numerous ways electricity could be both entertaining and educational.(Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)



DESIGNED TO  
STIMULATE  
INTERESTS IN  
GENERAL  
SCIENCE.  
REVEALING  
EXPERIMENTS.  
LABORATORY  
DEVELOPMENTS.  
PROCESSES  
AND PRODUCTS.



DEDICATED TO  
CHRISTIAN  
PRINCIPLES IN  
THE SERVICE OF  
DEMOCRACY.  
BETTER WORLD  
RELATIONS  
THRU GREATER  
KNOWLEDGE AND  
UNDERSTANDING.

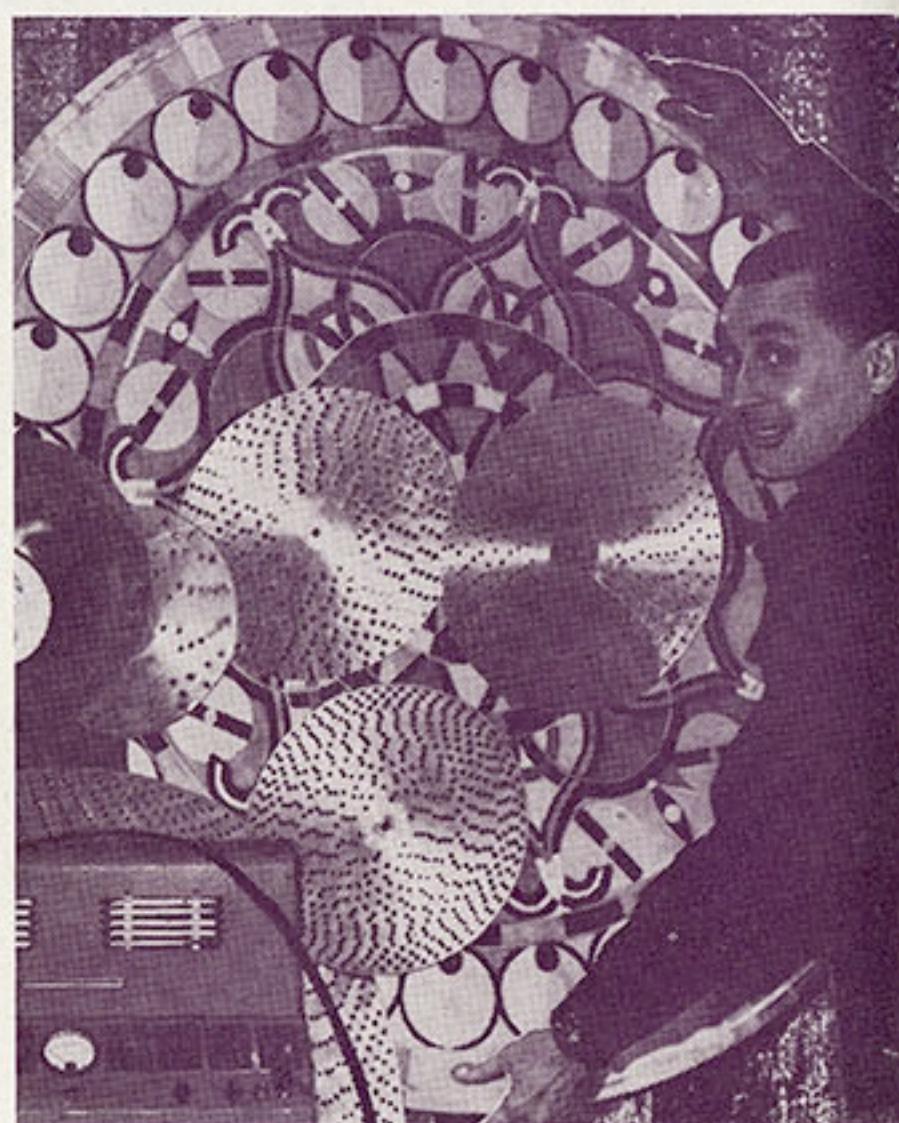


LIGHTNING SCREENS



PYROGEYSER

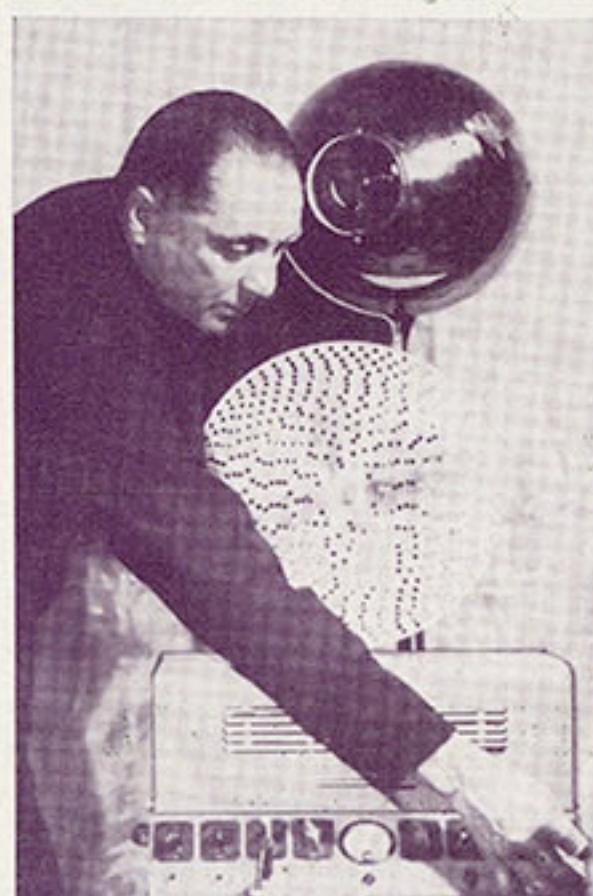
PALACE OF ELECTRICITY  
ELECTRICAL AGE EXPOSITION  
CALIFORNIA PACIFIC  
INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION  
GOLDEN GATE  
INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION  
CANADIAN NATIONAL  
EXHIBITION  
EASTERN STATES EXPOSITION  
SCHOOLS - CHURCHES - CLUBS



MAGNA-STROBOSCOPE



FLUORESCENCES



MAGIC MUSIC



HIGH FREQUENCY





Promotional literature sent to the State Fair from 1950 advertising hypnotist Fred C. Schneider accentuates the mysterious nature of his act. (Oregon State Archives Oregon State Fair Records)





A man is shot out of a cannon and becomes "a human projectile...disregarding life and limb in his breathless plunge through the air!" The stunt was part of the Fearless Greggs show offered to the 1948 State Fair.(Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)



# FEARLESS GREGGS

ENGINEER  
LEADERSHIP

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Human Projectile! . . .

*Disregarding Life and Limb  
In His Breathless Plunge  
Through the Air!*

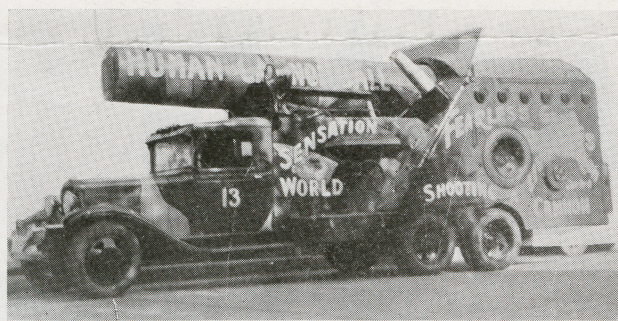
**Shooting a Living Person  
from a Roaring, Blazing,  
High POWERED CANNON**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

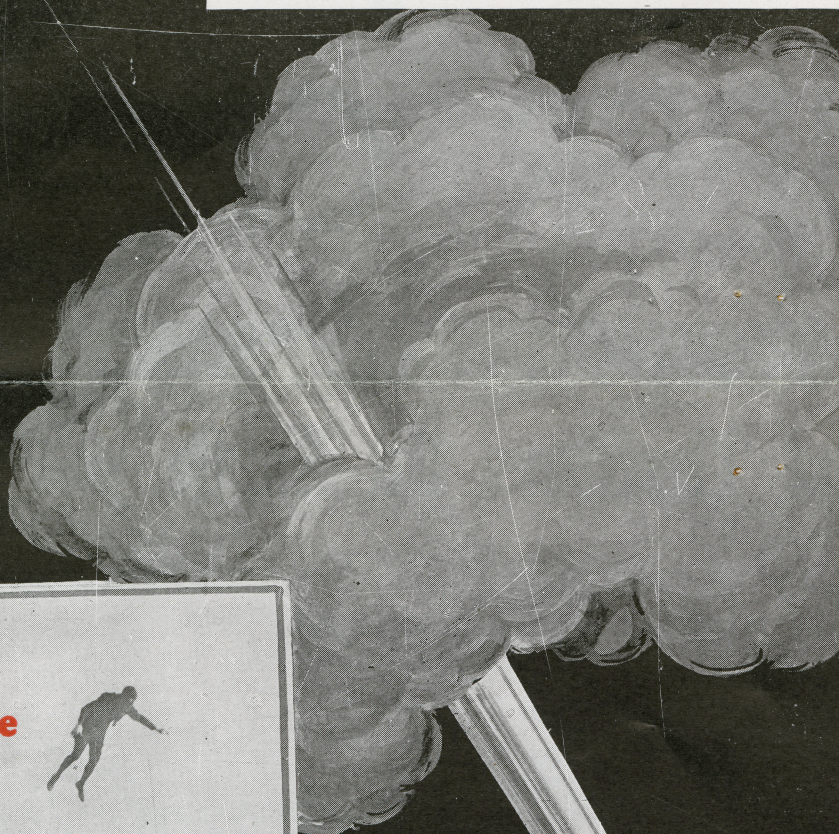


**Flying High —  
Somersaulting  
In The Sky!**

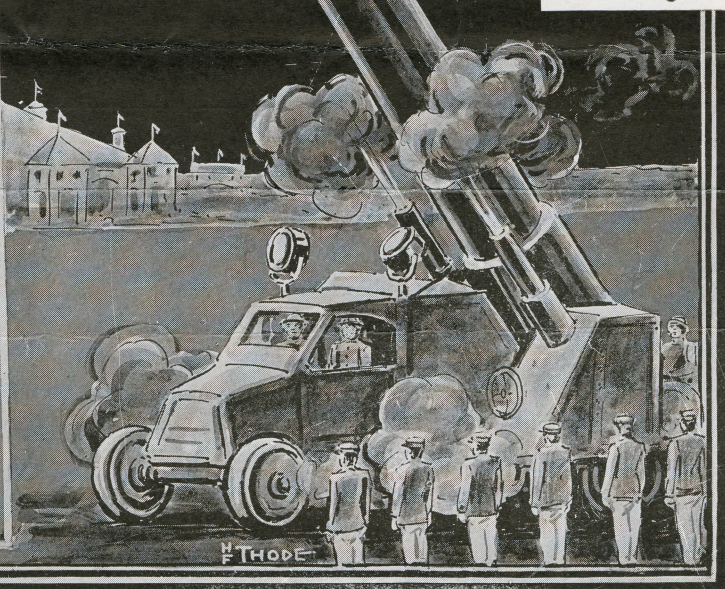
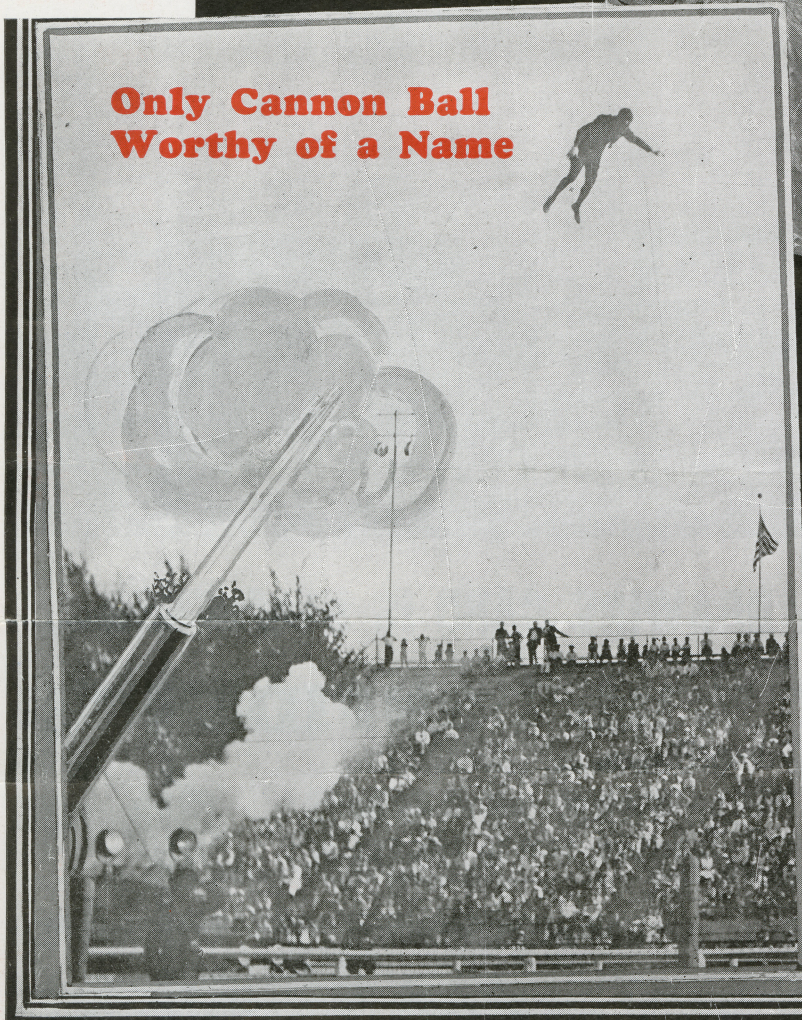
**"When GREATER Thrillers are  
Built, GREGG Will Build Them"**



**BELIEVE IN THRILLERS! — BUILD BUSINESS!**  
**45** YEARS of Pioneer Leadership in Thrillers has cast  
about this Name an Atmosphere of Dependability—  
Which Lives Strong in the Minds of the Amusement World . . . The Key to  
GREATNESS IS ORIGINALITY.



**Only Cannon Ball  
Worthy of a Name**



## Fearless Greggs — "Human Cannon Ball"

In this age of the super-sensational, nothing appears too difficult nor too dangerous for the professional dare-devil to attempt. The Fearless Greggs, nationally known producers of sensational feature attractions for more than 45 years, have announced and present for the amusement world their latest and greatest achievement—The "Human Cannon Ball." Now the public's appetite for the utmost in spine-chilling, breath-taking dare-deviltry will be satisfied 100 per cent. This attraction has

earning power—it is a crowd getter and a grandstand attendance record breaker. It is a feature that will live long in the memories of all that see it and cause more mouth-to-mouth advertising than any spectacular and sensational feature brought out in a decade.

Everything that goes to make up a performance of the most impressive nature is carried by the Fearless Greggs, and once advertised the whole community will be eager to witness the death-defying exhibition of the intrepid Capt. Gregg.





Spectators try to make sense of this strange chariot-like custom hot rod during the 1968 Custom Car Show at the State Fairgrounds. (Oregon State Archives, Oregon Fair Exposition Center Photos)



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(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Entertainment

### Music to My Ears

If you saw the last two pages of entertainment acts, you might be thinking "I've been to the State Fair and I saw some great, nationally famous musicians and bands." And you'd be right! Here is a sampling of the mainstream musical acts that have played at the State Fair over the years as well as links to YouTube Mix videos to give you a taste of their sounds.



Johnny Cash



Barbara Mandrell

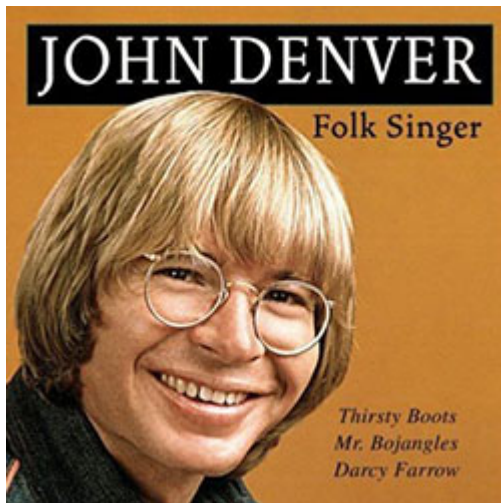


Natalie Cole



Doobie Brothers

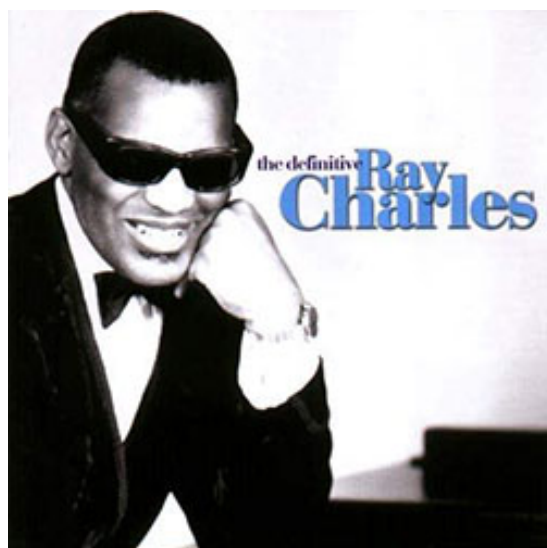




John Denver



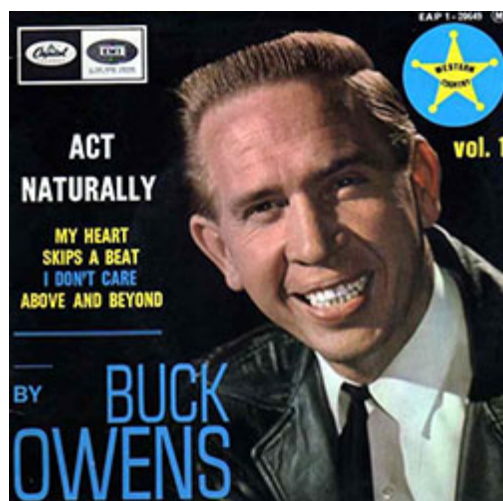
Pat Benatar



Ray Charles



Glen Campbell



Buck Owens

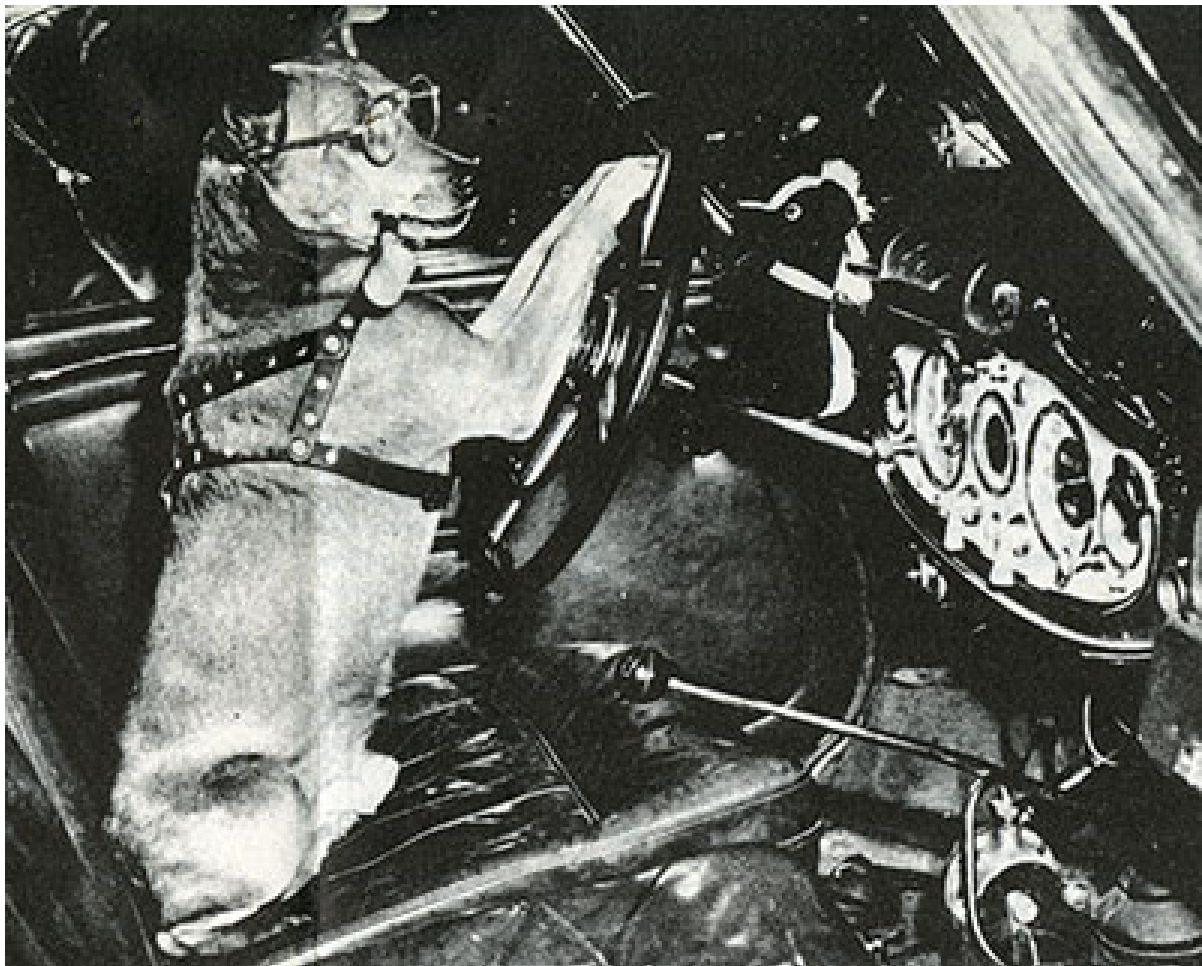


(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Weird and Wonderful

### Weird or Wonderful... Why Choose?

One person's entertainment is often just plain weird to another person. And let's face it, the State Fair is known for having strange stuff. But rather than reject the wacky and weird, maybe we should celebrate it as evidence of the capacity of the human mind to think outside of the ordinary. After all, one of the main reasons to go to the State Fair is to see unusual things. So, this section offers some of that along with some wonderful things too. Weird or wonderful? You decide!



Lucky the Dog, "the world's most obedient and human canine," appears to drive a car in this promotional photo. This clever dog and his human, Roy Newman, offered to perform at the 1948 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)



# World's Most

**OBEDIENT  
and HUMAN  
CANINE!**

*Comedy*  
**ALL THE WAY**

THE CHICAGO SUN, SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 1947

**ALL ABOUT  
THE TOWN  
with Dale Harriso**

The greatest pleasure I know is to do a good deed, and to have it found out by accident. —Charles Lamb

...  
all That's Life.  
ROY NEWMAN and his dog "Lucky" have been making the rounds of the city for a few weeks ago, being perfectly obedient to the commands of a dog act.  
The Chicago office of the dog act, which was recently into the city, has been making the rounds of the city, being perfectly obedient to the commands of a dog act.  
The Chicago office of the dog act, which was recently into the city, has been making the rounds of the city, being perfectly obedient to the commands of a dog act.

*Featured*

**WITH NAME  
BANDS IN  
THEATRES,  
LEADING  
HOTELS and  
NIGHT  
CLUBS**

**ONLY DOG**

to balance a glass filled with liquid while standing, lying, crawling up a high pedestal, and sitting up on his hind legs!

Lucky the Dog promotional flyer. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)





A mule dives into a pool at the 1963 State Fair. The "diving mules," trained by Jonny Rivers, gave four performances. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records) For those viewers who can't imagine a diving mule, this 2009 YouTube video from Texas shows [Smokey the Diving Mule in action](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMgKm-DRj_M).

([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMgKm-DRj\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMgKm-DRj_M))



<b>CLASS OF SERVICE</b> This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	<h1 style="margin: 0;">WESTERN UNION</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT</p>	1201	<b>SYMBOLS</b> DL = Day Letter NL = Night Letter LC = Deferred Cable NLT = Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram
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The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

PRA141 DL PD=STOCKTON CALIF 22 1040A=

SECRETARY OF FAIR=

AUG 22 PM 12 56

HAVE STRANGEST FREAK ATTRACTION IN WORLD. ONLY 2 HEADED BULL IN WORLD ALIVE. 3 EYES 4 NOSTRILS 2 MOUTHS ALIVE LOTS OTHER FREAKS BEST SHOW YOU EVER SAW. MUST HAVE NUMBER ONE LOCATION WHERE HIROHITOS HORSE SAT LAST YEAR AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE=

CHARLES SIMPSON CARE 2 HEADED BULL SHOW FAIR GROUNDS STOCKTON CALIF=

24/25

2 3 4 2 2=

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

This 1949 telegram insists on the best location at the State Fair to show the only two headed bull alive in the world. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)



A crowd strains to catch a glimpse of 1960 presidential candidate, John F. Kennedy, at the State Fair. The future president gave a speech that ended with: “I come to this valley in this fair today asking you to join me in the great national effort to rebuild the strength of America here and around the world. I think this country is ready to move again.” (Courtesy Stephen Heine) [Listen to Kennedy's speech](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muglY6MmziQ) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muglY6MmziQ) via YouTube.





Twins of all ages pose for a photo during the State Fair's 1964 special day for twins. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



Twins Karen Covey and Sharon Covey-Koskela ham in up at the State Fair Twins Day circa 1960. Sharon's granddaughter, Kelsey Quinn, works at the Oregon State Archives and helped produce the gallery version of this exhibit. (Courtesy Kelsey Quinn)



(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Weird and Wonderful

### Big Man on Campus

Superlatives were a fact of life for Clifford Thompson (1904-1955). He was the big man on campus... any campus. Thompson claimed to be 8 feet 7 inches tall (although this is disputed), 460 pounds and wore a shoe sized 22. His chest measured 46 inches across and his ring finger was the size of a 50-cent coin.

Also known as "The Scandinavian Giant," "The Wisconsin Paul Bunyan," and "Count Olaf," Thompson didn't stop growing until he was 27. Among other things, he was America's tallest:

- 1) lawyer (practiced in Iola, Wisconsin and Portland, Oregon)
- 2) actor
- 3) dairy farmer
- 4) travelling salesman

A typical meal for Clifford Thompson might consist of: 3 pounds of steak, three extra-large baked potatoes, several servings of vegetables, one quart of milk and one whole apple pie! A story claims that his first wife divorced him because she tired of preparing his meals.

To say that Thompson led an interesting life is an understatement. He worked in circuses, including Ringling Brothers, appeared in several movies, sold Blatz beer and later earned a law degree from Marquette University. Thompson moved to Portland, Oregon to practice law in 1949, where he was quoted as saying "I am here to live. I like the climate, the people, and the greenery." Upon arrival in Portland, Thompson contacted State Fair Manager Leo Spitzbart, offering to make a personal appearance, preferably on Children's Day, at the fair for \$125.

### Learn More

Read studylib.net article "[Clifford Thompson: Marquette's Giant of the Law](https://studylib.net/doc/15719664/clifford-thompson--marquette-s-giant-of-the-law-by-j.-go...)"

(<https://studylib.net/doc/15719664/clifford-thompson--marquette-s-giant-of-the-law-by-j.-go...>) by J. Gordon Hylton.



Clifford Thompson, "The Scandinavian Giant." (Source: "Clifford Thompson: Marquette's Giant of the Law" By J. Gordon Hylton)





Clifford Thompson towers over men of more normal height in 1948. (Source: "Clifford Thompson: Marquette's Giant of the Law" by J. Gordon Hylton)

<p><b>CLASS OF SERVICE</b></p> <p>This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.</p>	<h1 style="margin: 0;">WESTERN UNION</h1> <p style="font-size: small;">W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT</p>	<p><b>SYMBOLS</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>DL = Day Letter</td></tr> <tr><td>NL = Night Letter</td></tr> <tr><td>LC = Deferred Cable</td></tr> <tr><td>NLT = Cable Night Letter</td></tr> <tr><td>Ship Radiogram</td></tr> </table>	DL = Day Letter	NL = Night Letter	LC = Deferred Cable	NLT = Cable Night Letter	Ship Radiogram
DL = Day Letter							
NL = Night Letter							
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<p>The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.</p>							
<p>PRA324 NL PD=PORTLAND ORG 23=</p> <p>LEO G SPITZBART OREGON STATE FAIR=</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>PO Box 671</i></p> <p>THE MOST UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY OF HAVING A PERSONAL APPEARANCE AT YOUR FAIR BY THE WORLDS TALLEST MAN FOR ONE DAY PREFERRABLY CHILDRENS DAY IS POSSIBLE. NATIONAL PUBLICITY NOW GOING ON. COST ONLY ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FIVE DOLLARS. WILL MAIL PUBLICITY MATERIAL. WIRE DATE DESIRED, ADMIRAL HOTEL=</p> <p>CLIFFORD M THOMPSON=.</p>							
<p>1201</p> <p>1949 AUG 23 PM 10 30</p> <p><i>29125-10</i> <i>adve</i></p> <p><i>747a</i></p> <p><i>By mail</i></p>							
<p>THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE</p>							



Thompson sent this telegram to State Fair manager Leo Spitzbart in 1949 offering to make a personal appearance for a fee. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)



Thompson shakes hands with a man around the time that he earned his teacher's certificate in Wisconsin. The doorway appears to be normally sized. (Source: "Clifford Thompson: Marquette's Giant of the Law" by J. Gordon Hylton)





Thompson poses for a photo while in Hollywood in the early 1930s.  
(Source: [bottlesboozeandbackstories.blogspot.com](http://bottlesboozeandbackstories.blogspot.com))



(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Weird and Wonderful

### Hitler's Car?

Christopher Janus, a Chicago businessman and owner of what was touted as Hitler's personal touring limousine, offered to have the automobile displayed at the 1950 State Fair. Janus obtained the monstrous 20 foot, five ton, armor-plated Mercedes when a Swedish company failed to pay for a shipment of ball bearings. In lieu of money, the Swedish owner offered to pay with a vehicle that he insisted was Adolf Hitler's personal automobile.

Although this might seem appalling to our 21st century senses, it is not as weird as you may think once you dig under the surface.

When Janus, a Greek immigrant, accepted the limousine as payment, he had an idea to take it on tour of the United States and have the car do some good. Wouldn't Americans want to see the prized possession of the despot they just defeated?

While public perception was mixed, the car had no trouble attracting a paying audience. Janus set up a trust through which he distributed the cash the limousine made. The admission fees were voluntary and benefited an array of causes, including war orphans of Greece, hospitals, cancer patients, the American Legion, and programs for underprivileged children.

At the end of his four year tour, crossing the United States three times, including cities in Oregon, Janus estimated the limousine raised \$1,000,000 for 150 charities.

The car caught the attention of State Fair Manager Leo Spitzbart in 1950, who wrote a letter asking for more information:



German dictator Adolf Hitler gives the Nazi salute to the crowds as he stands in one of his Mercedes convertibles.  
(Wikimedia Commons)



April 6, 1950.

P. O. Box 671

Stevenson & Jordan  
111 North Marion Street  
Oak Park, Illinois.

Gentlemen:

Under what conditions do you show  
the Hitler Automobile at State Fairs?

Very truly yours,

Leo G. Spitzbart  
Manager

ICS-e



Wednesday, January 25, 1950

# Man Who Bought Hitler Car Finds It Pays Dividends

Chicago, (U.P.)—Christopher G. Janus, who bought Adolph Hitler's personal armored automobile, is getting a big kick out of using the car in a way "I'm sure Hitler would not have liked."

"My aim in putting the car on exhibition," Janus said, "was in addition to recovering my investment, to have the car do some good."

"I felt the more good it did, the worse Hitler would have liked it. In fact, most of the things I did, I'm sure Hitler would have not liked."

Here are some of the ways in which money earned by the car was used:

## Greeks Aided

For six poor Greek students whose families were murdered by the Nazis, to go to Athens college, an American institution in Greece.

Clothes for displaced persons in Bay City, Mich.

Three Jewish boys sent to a camp last summer in Palatine, Ill.

Recruiting aided in the U. S. army and air force in New York.

School books for poor children in Montgomery, W. Va.

Helped to build a barn on a poor boys farm in Macon, Ga., and a bank in Montezuma, Ga.

Uniforms for the Lions Boys club in Miami, Fla.

Transcript:

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## CHRONOLOGY

- Made under Hitler's personal supervision in 1941 at the Mercedes-Benz plant—Germany; cost \$35,000.00.
- Used by Hitler until presented to Field Marshal Mannerheim personally as a gift on Mannerheim's 70th birthday.
- Taken from Finland to Sweden when Russia invaded Finland.
- Brought from Sweden to the U.S. in 1948.
- Shown since that time in the United States for benefit of various charitable organizations.
- Approximately 20,000 miles on auto now.

### ***Specifications in Brief . . . . HITLER'S Personal Mercedes-Benz Automobile . . . .***

**Model**—"Grosse Mercedes" Type 770 or 7.7 liter. Total road weight 10,000 lbs.

**Engine**—Straight eight, cast en-bloc.

**Supercharger**—Cuts in automatically whenever the accelerator pedal is fully depressed.

**Body**—Eight passenger convertible, three auxiliary seats in the rear compartment. The windshield and the six side windows, operated by heavy duty mechanisms, are supplemented by a crank con-

trolled rear armor plate shield, forming an all around bullet-proof protective enclosure.

**Dual Carburetor**—With thermostatically controlled twin intake manifold.

**Transmission**—Five speeds forward with overdrive—synchromesh on 2nd to 5th speeds.

**Brakes**—4 wheel, with automatic booster which minimizes braking effort.

**Tools**—A complete set of nearly 100.

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**COST OF REPLACEMENT ESTIMATED AT \$35,000.00**

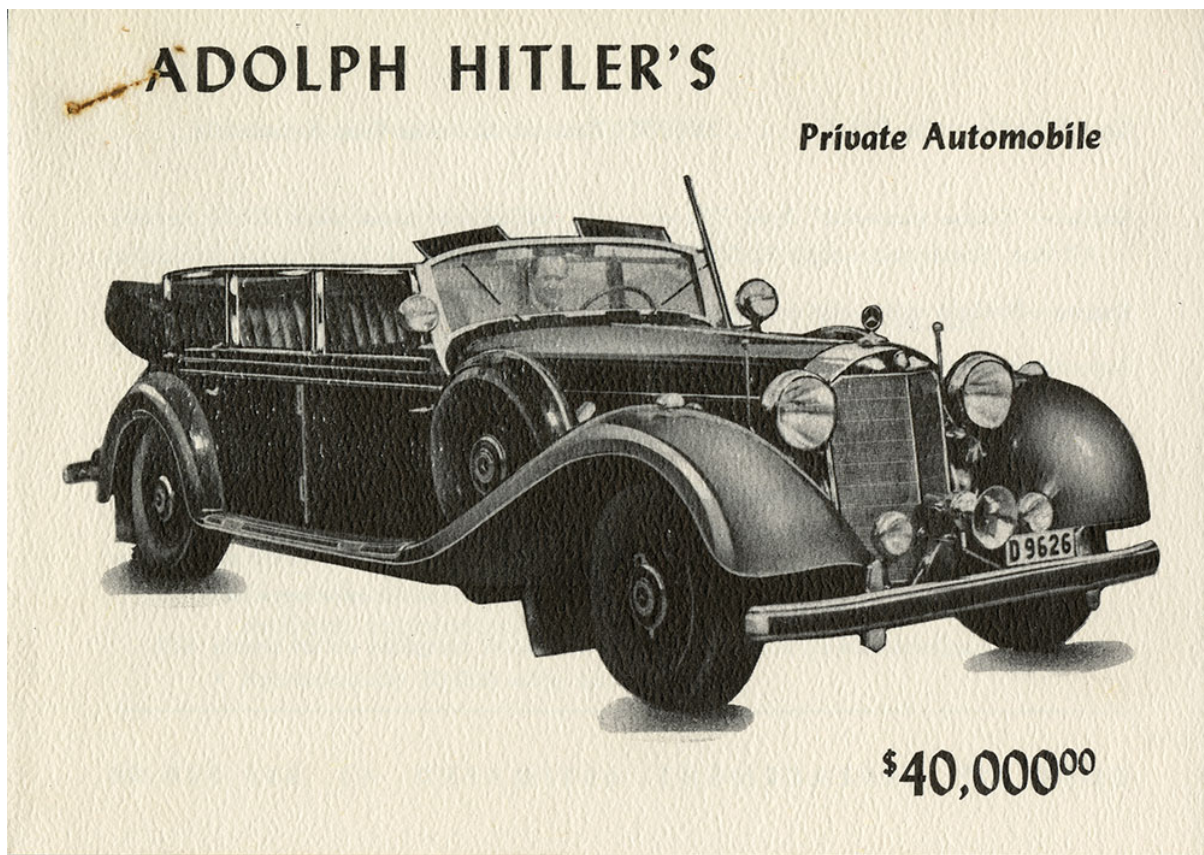
A chronology of the car's history along with specifications are part of the promotional material designed to entice fair managers to book a showing of the vehicle at the State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)





Christopher Janus accepts shipment from Sweden of what was billed as "Hitler's Car," a massive, armor-plated Mercedes convertible. (K.H. Gibson III via Smithsonian.com)





A man sits behind the wheel of what was apparently Adolf Hitler's car in this promotional literature sent to the State Fair in 1950. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Records)



Hitler climbs into the Mercedes convertible that he had been using as his personal car before giving it to German Field Marshal Carl Mannerheim in Finland. This is the vehicle that made its way to Christopher Janus in Chicago and eventually to Oregon. (Finnish Armed Forces)



(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Rides and Games

### That Unique Carnival Experience

So, after walking by countless livestock pens perfumed by the smell of manure, eating way too much rich fair food, and seeing a lot of weird stuff, what could be better than to hop on board a wild ride specifically designed to scramble your mind and stomach? One of these rides is actually called the Scrambler, so don't say you weren't warned. The Rock-O-Plane, manufactured in Salem, Oregon until 1985, is another prime example. It looks benign enough, like a Ferris wheel at first glance. But then you'll notice that the riders sit in cages that can spin end over end as the cage goes around the wheel. Devilish! Yet, in addition to making many people dizzy, these rides also offer thrills and excitement while putting big smiles on the faces of most riders.



Daring Rock-O-Plane riders spin their cages as the entire ride circles like a Ferris wheel. (Wikimedia Commons)

And what would a State Fair be without the carnival games? Shooting games, ring tosses, racing games, the "Dime Pitch" and Whac-A-Mole are just a few of the common contests of skill or chance. Across the country, some ingeniously dishonest carnival operators have been known to rig their games to make it next to impossible to win. But that never happened at the State Fair.... Right? Regardless of the historic reputation attached to these games, they provide a lot of entertainment for a few quarters. Not a bad deal.





Kids of all ages play a shooting game at the State Fair.  
(Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



The faces of these grown men show the strain of competition as they race go-karts at the circa 1962 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, Oregon Fair Exposition Center)



A gleeful girl rides the merry-go-round ride at the 1980 State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)





As shown here in 1963, nighttime in the fairway with the lights on the rides and games is an especially fun time to experience the State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)





Fairgoers enjoy the swing ride at a circa 1980s State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)





It's all smiles for kids on the rollercoaster during a circa 1980 State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)



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## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Rides and Games

### Escape to the Fair!

The State Fair is for every Oregonian but especially for the young. On the rides, kids experience and show a pure joy and thrill that comes from being completely in the moment. Still, those of us who are older can experience that feeling too. Just look at the adults on a roller coaster ride wearing grins from ear to ear. There is something utterly liberating about leaving mortgages, politics, and other life challenges behind, if only for an evening. So the next time the State Fair rolls around, remember that a little escapism on the carnival rides can be good for your mental health.



Riders get a bird's eye view of the State Fair during their 15 minute FairLift ride about 30 feet above the ground. (Oregon State Fair Foundation)





This little girl is delighted to be in the driver's seat on this ride in the Kiddie Ride section of the 1980 State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



Centrifugal force keeps riders glued to their seats on the Enterprise ride in the carnival section of the State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)



Giant stuffed bears that are awarded to game winners tempt passersby to stop and play a horse racing game at the State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)





This bird's eye view shows the circa 1965 State Fair Tunnel of Love and fairway. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)





A boy uses a special technique to try to beat the odds in the ring toss game at a circa 1960s State Fair. (Oregon State Archives, State Fair Photos)



Official web site of

# Oregon Secretary of State

(<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book>)

## Exploring the Oregon State Fair: Credits

### Thank You!

We hope you enjoyed exploring the Oregon State Fair over the decades. The following people helped in the production of this exhibit:

### Gallery Exhibit

Theresa Rea: Exhibit Coordinator and Lead

These State Archives staff members contributed to the research, writing, editing, design, printing, mounting and installation needed to complete the gallery exhibit:

Kristine Deacon (Volunteer)  
Mary Beth Herkert  
Andrew Needham  
Kelsey Quinn  
Austin Schulz  
Todd Shaffer

Additional assistance on the gallery exhibit was provided by the following:

Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center  
June Bowersox  
Joe Bowersox, III  
Leslie Cummings  
Berneice Franz  
Larry Franz  
Steven Heine  
Emmelie Jorgensen  
Kamilah Jorgensen  
Abigail Memmott  
Benjamin Memmott  
Dani Morley  
Sarah Rivera

### Web Exhibit

Gary Halvorson: Design, production, and additional text and photos.



Throngs of fairgoers walk by food booths at the 1980 State Fair. (Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center)