

# N.C. State Fair a Smorgasbord of Sights, Sounds

BY KIM COSTELLO  
FEATURES EDITOR

RALEIGH — Even before you see the red, white and blue "Welcome" flags waving, and almost before you see the lights of the ferris wheel, you hear the sounds of the N.C. State Fair.

The screams of the riders on the Himalaya, the Zipper and the Rainbow are audible well outside the gates, and the shouts of barkers hawking their games carry over the hordes of people that line the Midway, the main drag of the fair.

Music blares over the loudspeakers of every ride, and vendors try to coerce passers-by into buying just one more plate of barbecue or an extra bag of cotton candy.

"This is something we look forward to every year," Grady Insoe of Oxford said. "Even though I had to work this morning, I just had to bring my kids out to the fair. To me, all this hubbub is just all for the kids."

But Mike and Deborah Peoples of Zebulon, who brought their sons Shane, 11, and Kevin, 8, said they had as much fun as their children did.

"This is really for everybody," Mike Peoples said. "Just being with the crowd and enjoying the food, looking at the exhibits and rides. It's impossible not to have a good time."

Shane Peoples agreed that he loved coming to the fair. "I've only been on seven

## General Information About the N.C. State Fair

**Admission:** Gate admission is \$6 for adults; \$5 advance sale, (Group rates available) and \$1 for children ages 6-12; free for ages 5 and under. Senior citizens 65 and over are admitted free.

**Fairground hours:** Gates and exhibit halls open at 9 a.m.; the Midway and rides open at 10 a.m.; Exhibit halls close at 9:45 p.m. Fairgrounds close at midnight.

**Entertainment:** 7 p.m. each night at Dorton Arena; free on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**Monday, Oct. 18** — The Oak Ridge Boys

**Tuesday, Oct. 19** — Shenandoah

**Wednesday, Oct. 20** — Sammy Kershaw

**Thursday, Oct. 21** — Alison Krauss & Union Station

**Friday, Oct. 22** — Mark Collie

**Saturday, Oct. 23** — Waylon Jennings

**Sunday, Oct. 24** — Collin Raye



rides .... That's not very many. I like the Enterprise the best so far."

Jessica Smith of Apex, who celebrated her 18th birthday Sunday, said she made it a birthday tradition to go to the fair.

"We just come and ride the rides and look at all the craft shows, and we look at the cows," she said, laughing. "The cows are always fun."

"We look at the guys, too," interjected her friend, Martha Alexander, 17, of Raleigh. "The funhouses are good places to

members of the group, including William Friday, former president of the UNC system, Carrboro Alderman Jacquelyn Gist and UNC head basketball coach Dean

meet guys."

Smith said the fair had changed a lot over the years. "There are more people every year, and it gets more expensive, especially the food. And I love the food — the Polish sausage and the elephant ears."

Elephant ears? "They're my favorite sweet thing," Smith explained.

Marty Smith, a Hendersonville resident who sells the delicacies, was able to clear up the mystery. "They're a fried pastry dough, somewhere between the consistency

Smith and his local-activist wife Linnea Smith.

On Wednesday morning, Schutz and Price met with the Coalition for Clergy, an organization of 40 congregations and chaplains from the Chapel Hill area, which voted unanimously to join NCGC.

The group would like to see a ban on semi-automatic assault weapons and the Brady Bill passed, Price said.

"We want to work for legislation on gun

of a doughnut and bread," she said. "We cover them in butter and sprinkle cinnamon sugar and powdered sugar on them."

If that's not sweet enough, fairgoers can have their ears topped with an apple sauce or hot fudge. The name comes from the pastry's shape and size, Smith said.

As it turns out, elephant ears are only one of the many treats available from the multitude of vendors that line the Midway. Hundreds of civic organizations sponsor booths as a fund-raiser, and professional merchants sell their specialties.

One unusual booth is the Raleigh Jaycees' turkey shoot, where contestants shoot a .28-gauge shotgun at a target. The pellet closest to the bullseye wins a turkey — plucked and packaged, of course.

But the main attractions for many are still the rides, which sport rows of lights that rival Las Vegas in terms of color and number. There are leisurely rides as well as those that should be ridden only by people with stomachs of steel, particularly after ingesting the typical fair food.

Farther off the muddy, beaten paths of the Midway are the exhibits, some that are perennial favorites, like Goliath — the 500-pound horse. And the line at the Winston Motorsports race car exhibit is longer than those of the rides.

"Dodging all the people is half the fun of the fair," Jessica Smith said. "I can't imagine a year without it."

control, locally, regionally, state-wide and nationally," she said.

Arthur Finn, group board member, said he thought most people favored stricter gun control, so the group planned to bring these opinions out into the open.

"In a general sense, we want to do something to control the spread of guns in the state," Finn said. "How far we go depends on the general attitude of the people that join."

# Hunt, Graham Open Fair With a Look Back at Past

BY GREGORY RAY  
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — N.C. Gov. Jim Hunt and N.C. Commissioner of Agriculture Jim Graham welcomed the crowds and praised the tradition behind the N.C. State Fair at the fair's 126th annual opening ceremonies at Raleigh's Dorton Arena Friday.

"There are 68 fine rides, arts, crafts, fine food, good food," Graham said. "There's a lot to be seen. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do."

The theme of this year's fair is "Got a Good Thing Growing."

Hunt said the fair was an age-old tradition for N.C. residents who made a yearly pilgrimage to the event.

"It's important that we remember the origins of the fair. It stands as proof that goodness grows in North Carolina," he said.

Hunt summarized his feelings about the event by telling a story about the role the fair played in the life of the state's citizens. "Our state fair reflects the seasons of our lives," he said.

He then told the story of a 4-year-old boy who came to the fair and said he wanted to ride the "whirligig."

Ten years later, the 14-year-old boy came to the fair with his girlfriend and tried to impress her.

Many years later, he would be a young father, attending the fair with a son of his own.

Much later, the young father would come as a 75-year-old grandfather with a 6-year-old grandson, who would say he wanted to ride the "whirligig."

Hunt told another story that came from his own personal memories of the fair.

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JIM HUNT  
N.C. Governor

He said he remembered naming his cows after his girlfriends.

Hunt said he had brought two of his heifers to compete at the state fair one year, and the heifer named after a former girlfriend won instead of the heifer named after his girlfriend.

"Boy, was I in trouble at home," he said.

Hunt closed his speech by honoring the fair and the state.

"Thousands of us come to remember our heritage," he said. "This is the greatest state fair in America; the greatest state in America."

Graham described the fair as "fully family-oriented with an emphasis on education and art."

Sam Rand, manager of the fair, also welcomed people to the event. He was followed by Raleigh Mayor Avery Upchurch.

Upchurch jokingly said he had been in charge of the fair's weather for the past 10 years and Graham had offered him the position of weather consultant when his last term as mayor was completed.

"I have for ten years forecasted the weather," Upchurch said. "We have had fair weather."

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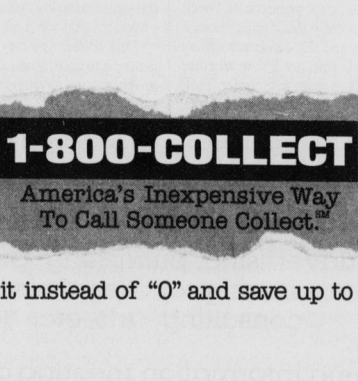
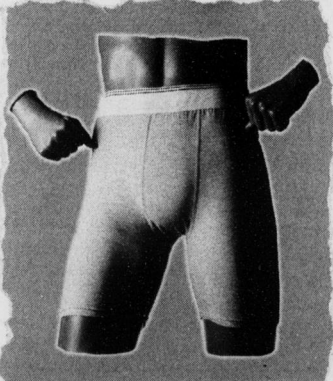
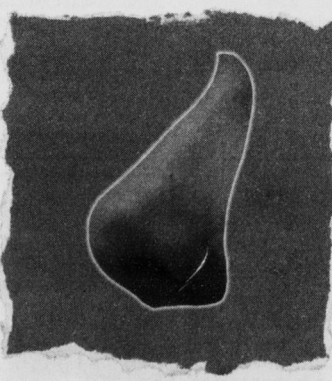
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