

A treasure of pleasures

# State Fair boasts family-oriented fun package



Two young children enjoy exhibits and livestock shows ... cow remained content even when boy sat on her back DTH/FILE photo

By CINDY HAGA

"A Treasure of Pleasures," the theme of this year's state fair in Raleigh, relates the idea of the fair as a family-oriented fun package.

It's not so much the rides and the games that draw crowds to Raleigh, though: the exhibits are what get so many people excited at this fair.

Crafts exhibits, of canned peaches, jack-o-lanterns, and blankets, intrigue those who just like to look at different types of creativity. But they also interest those who like to compare the ingenuity of others' work with that of their own.

"The number of entries is just amazing in craft competitions," said Jim Knight, a N.C. public information officer. Last year, there were over 800 in handicrafts alone.

The fair's Village of Yesteryear gives beginners a chance to view skilled craftwork and to ask questions of the N.C. professional craftsmen who man their own booths for the length of the fair.

A good chance for collecting both free information and free samples is provided by the commodity groups exhibits, where rows of tables offer millions of pamphlets, slide shows, and munchies.

"A Carousel of Skills," displayed in a geodesic (multi-sided) dome by the N.C. Dept. of Education,

is another arena of knowledge.

The dome, run by public school children from across the state, covers vocational agriculture, trade and industrial education, marketing and distribution, home economics, health occupations, industrial arts, and pre-vocational education.

Also featured in the dome is a futures arena; on display here are techniques and instruments, such as computers, that will be used in future jobs.

The fair's agricultural exhibits offer on-the-spot rewards to competitors—it seems that this is where the real money from the fair is.

Even with the tremendous number of entries—for example, 400 goats competed last year—Knight said the N.C. state fair is completely self-supporting, with prize money coming either from entry fees or gate proceeds.

The prize money is awarded to those entering cattle, poultry, vegetables, sheep, goats, bees and honey, and rabbits.

Knight said there is over \$20,000 in prize money just for hog competitions; what else could be expected for hogs with such brands as Berkshire, Hampshire, and Yorkshire?

Cindy Haga is a staff writer for The Daily Tar Heel.

## Ride safety insured by inspections

By JOSEPH OLINICK

Have you ever worried about how safe the wild and crazy rides at the North Carolina State Fair are? Well, there is no reason to worry.

Inspectors from the elevator division of the North Carolina Department of Labor inspect every ride at the State Fair, and the inspection is very thorough.

"When the 115th State Fair opens, each of the more than 50 rides will have endured a stringent inspection," said Jim Godwin, in charge of amusement ride inspections for the NCLD.

"Each ride is inspected as it is assembled," he said. "Each ride is monitored daily before the midway opens at 10 a.m."

The stringent inspections have evidently paid off.

"Over the years, we've never had a fatal accident to a rider or an amusement ride at the fair," Godwin said.

"We had remarkable few accidents last year. It's hard to say why when you have so many people and so many rides. We didn't have to send anybody to the hospital."

Godwin added that there were a few bumped heads and other very minor injuries at last year's fair.

The Labor Department's 12 inspectors are a big reason there have never been any amusement ride fatalities in North Carolina, Godwin said.

Amusement ride accidents are "caused

by the action or lack of action by the rider," Godwin said.

Godwin gave the following safety precautions for rides:

- Follow the operator's instructions.
- Make sure restraints are fastened properly.
- Do not ride on a ride if you are too big or small for it.
- Keep your arms and legs inside the ride.
- If you are pregnant, wait till next year.

"The bottom line for having another safe State Fair is, as it is always is, the good judgment and common sense of fairgoers," Godwin said. "We expect it to be a great fair."

"We try to make sure people can really enjoy the State Fair by assuring the rider's safety," said Ginny Lawler, of NCDL's public relations department.

Godwin said owners and operators of the rides were very responsible and careful. Running a ride haphazardly or having an accident occur would be very detrimental to their business and livelihood.

The amusement rides can be set up overnight, but in Raleigh they have been setting up the rides since Monday. The rides are being cleaned, painted, and checked for mechanical problems, Godwin said.

Joseph Olinick is a staff writer for The Daily Tar Heel.



The paratrooper is one of many rides at the State Fair ... officials inspect the rides before the Fair opens DTH/FILE photo

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