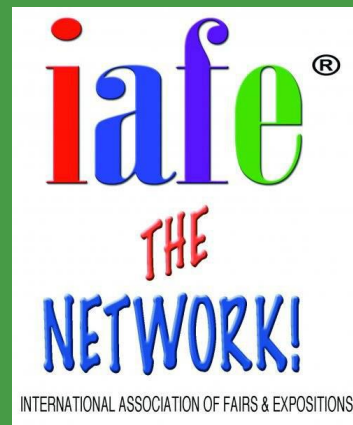




MAAF NEWSLETTER

September/
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Issue #5



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT by BARRY NORRIS

After so much planning and waiting, our Maine agricultural fairs have opened to very enthusiastic fairgoers. I have attended all of the June, July and August fairs. Most have experienced increased gate numbers – despite heavy rains, heat and the lack of a carnival. The vendors are reporting excellent sales, and it is quite evident that fairgoers are glad to be outside eating fair food! I look forward to visiting the fall fairs, and applaud all of our fairs on their hard work and perseverance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our sports wagering bill continues to sit on the Appropriations table. I do believe that the bill will see some action by the end of this calendar year.

SAVE THE DATES: January 21, 22, and 23, 2022 are the dates for the Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs annual conference. The Holiday Inn Portland - by the Bay, has informed us that they are not able to provide adequate space for our meeting in 2022, *however* the Portland Sheraton at Sable Oaks has stepped forward to fill the void. Located on 200 Sable Oaks Drive in South Portland, the MAAF board was invited to tour the facility and found it more than adequate for our conference. More information will be forthcoming in the November-December newsletter as well as on the MAAF website.

The Maine Farm Bureau has generously offered to sponsor a set of new MAAF pullup banners introducing fair folks to our first ten years of Rising Star recipients.

Thank you all for your support for our agricultural fairs and for each other as we slowly emerge from a very difficult time for everyone. Please take time to visit our fall fairs and enjoy all that they have to offer. Barry

MAAF BOARD MEMBER PROFILES



MAAF BOARD MEMBER CATHERINE "KATIE" DAMREN

Katie is from Belgrade. She is our legislative liaison and has been an active member of the MAAF for many years. Serving as our first executive director, Katie smoothly transitioned to legislative liaison in time to work collaboratively with Lincoln Orff and Barry Norris to successfully promote and pass Maine's first casino gambling bill. This legislation provided much needed funds for Maine's agricultural fairs. Katie is also known as one of the familiar faces associated with our MAAF scholarship fundraising. Working the 50-50 raffle ticket sales with her son Mark, and Roger and Gail Hoffses from Northern Maine Fair, Katie has successfully raised a substantial amount of money that has provided for

agriculture focused college scholarships. As a young girl Katie grew up on a farm. Whether haying with horses (when she gathered up the "scatterings"), working in the orchard with her sisters, or cutting wood to sell in Augusta, her family always looked forward to going to Windsor Fair. In the summer, going to the fair was what all farm families did. Everyone used to get a day off to go to the fair – from school or from chores. Now Katie looks forward to seeing the animals when she travels to fairs across Maine. "I guess you could say that I am a farmer by trade."

MAAF BOARD MEMBER KATHERINE "KAT" KUGELMAN

Katherine is from North Bridgton, is on our MAAF junior advisory board and an IT Committee member. She was introduced to agricultural fairs as a youngster. In high school, she was drawn in by the rides, games and Friday night shows. However, as she completed her college degree in equine business management at Cazanovia College in New York, she realized that the passion that she felt working in the horse industry could lead to a role in the agricultural fair world. She was invited to help with the Fryeburg Fair horse show, and was quickly promoted from assistant to superintendent of the 4-H Horse Show. Kat also works with Hope Ricker as her assistant in the Draft Horse and Pony shows. In August of 2018, the "Ribbon Princess" (as she is affectionately referred to) was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Kat insisted that she be able to continue in her roles at the fair, and with the help of her amazing team of local assistants from Brownfield, she has maintained her



focus and passion for her work with horses and Fryeburg Fair. Kat also serves as a member of the Maine Chapter of Incorporators for The Big E, and is a trustee of the Maine 4-H Foundation.

REMINDERS

2021 Maine Fair Season (September-October)

Windsor Fair - August 29 -September 6
Blue Hill - September 2-6
Harmony Free Fair - September 3-6
Springfield Fair - September 4-5
Clinton Fair - September 9-12
Litchfield Fair - September 10-12
Clinton Lions Agricultural Fair - September 9-12
Litchfield Fair - September 10-12
Oxford Fair - September 15-18
Farmington Fair - September 19-25
Common Ground Country Fair - September 24-26 (cancelled)
Cumberland Fair - September 26-October 2
Fryeburg Fair - October 3-10

Trail of Terror, Union Fair, October 15 & 16, 22 & 23, 29 & 30

Bring auction items for our MAAF auction. FMI: Contact Jeff Chadbourne 1-207-683-5873

Bicentennial award applications are due November 1.

Rising Star award applications are due January 1, 2022 - Look for the new Rising Star Award banners at the fall fairs.

Thank you to the **Maine Farm Bureau** for sponsoring these colorful banners.

Big E (Eastern States Exposition)
Sept 17- Oct 3

IAFE Annual Conference
November 28-December 1, San Antonio, TX

81st Agricultural Trades Show
January 11-13, Augusta, ME

MAAF 2022 Annual Conference January 21, 22 & 23, 2022
Portland Sheraton at Sable Oaks

FAIR VISITS & RECAPS

Houlton Fair July 3 – July 4

"It was CRAZY busy!"

"We saw *families* playing kids games together – like mom and dad with two sisters and two brothers doing the wheelbarrow races!"

"People came up to me saying that they appreciated our efforts and asking what could they do to help!"

"Our colorful exhibition hall had several childrens' activities and was very popular, especially with the many newcomers to our fair!"

As you read the comments from Houlton fair volunteers and board members, you can get a sense of what the fair was like this year. All the fair directors worked together as a team planning for their 2021 Houlton Fair event. Starting several months ago working on COVID CDC guidelines right up through two semi-rainy days, this team never gave up. The

livestock area saw more visitors than they have had in years (just ask Molly!), and the mechanical events were packed with spectators cheering on their favorites. Houlton Fair BUCKS were won as prizes and then redeemed at the food vendor booths. Moose Maine-iah Monster Rides operated non-stop both days.

Northern Maine Fair July 6-9

Live on Facebook.... the 4-H Baby Beef Auction! A+ social media coverage! The Easton FFA scooped countless ice cream cones day after day, Little Farmers at the Fair was staffed by groups such as Northern Light AR Gould Hospital and University of Maine at Presque Isle students and staff, and, in the pouring rain, countless families patiently waited their turn to ride in the Monster MAINE-IAH Monster truck (generously sponsored by Carroll's Auto Sales). Daily agriculture education seminars were offered in the exhibition hall covering soil health, water bath canning, and electric pressure cooking. New this year, two talks each offering one pesticide recertification credit. Make & Take activities for children and free children's carnival games added to a family oriented day at the fair! Lynwood Winslow, his directors and volunteers worked hard to present an extraordinary program! Bravo!

Ossipee Valley Fair July 8-11

Ossipee Valley Fair knew that their fairgoers would be coming, and they pulled out all the stops! The landscape project entries had made the fairgrounds look especially welcoming, the food vendors were well stocked and ready, and not even the heavy rain could dissuade folks from enjoying the Grand Parade and then pouring through the gates! Horse pulling was as popular as ever, agriculture education information was sprinkled throughout, and many entries in the exhibition hall had a Maine Bicentennial focus. Congratulations to Bill Jones and crew!





Waterford World's Fair July 16-18

Waterford World's Fair did not disappoint! The ladies in the Fiber Tent greeted fairgoers with their usual exemplary display of items, captivating demonstrations and engaging smiles. Small folks could ride the Tractor Train, explore the Little Hands agriculture tent or feast on some shaved ice. Adults were drawn to the steer and ox cart demonstrations (narrated by Drew Conroy), the always popular blacksmith shop, the saddle horse show or some yummy fish and

chips! Lisa Fox's team were visible helping fairgoers all across the grounds making sure that everyone had a Blue Ribbon day at this unique Maine agriculture fair.



Pittston July 22 – 25

Record-setting crowds poured into Pittston fairgrounds to enjoy everything from cotton candy, Maine Cabin Masters, free bicycles and grow-your-own strawberry plants. "I had an amazing time at the Pittston Fair with the family. I couldn't be happier!" Fairy gardens in the exhibition hall, making memories at the pig scrambles and dining on the Pittston Fire Department red hot fair fries. Horse and oxen pulling were as popular as ever. Farmers Draft Horse Mule and Pony Club turned out to display their scoot and twitch skills, Ledgeway Farm offered goat milking and soap felting demonstrations, and the exhibition hall encouraged their visitors to vote on a wide variety of "Peoples' Favorite" displays. Congratulations go to Steve McGee and his hard working team for an outstanding fair!

Topsham Fair August 8 – 15

The new animal barn at Topsham Fair is gorgeous! Post and beam construction with new corral panels throughout. Fairgoers can see animals from every angle! Another sight to take in at the fair was the pumpkin and sunflower garden. Welcoming fall with vibrant colors, this exhibit was a standout! Introducing racing fans to the harness racing drivers and trainers was a highlight of the program on Saturday! Leon Brilliant and his Topsham team were thrilled to watch their gate exceed past years by a significant percentage.

Skowhegan Fair August 12- 21

"This is the best fun day EVER!" These words from a little girl sitting at a picnic table eating a hot dog with her family. Skowhegan had something for every family member. Bunnies and chickens to pet, elegant quilts and needlework, harness horse racing, beekeepers in the Maple House and so much more. Area youth waited patiently to lead their blue ribbon animals into the livestock show ring. A unique Maine tradition since 1818, Skowhegan Fair is the nation's oldest continuously run agricultural fair. Tom Dillon, his directors and volunteers continue to host a fantastic event.

Union Fair August 21 -28

Rainy days and scorching temperatures didn't stop Knox County families from pouring through the gates to enjoy a return of their hometown blueberry festival fair. Colorful bouncy houses were filled with the laughter of small children, veterans were celebrated in a special program recognizing their service to country, and young men and women auctioned off their prize winning poultry, lamb and beef to the highest bidders. Maine's Bicentennial celebration was featured in the fair exhibition hall. A highlight of the week was the 1st Annual Mud Run, with participants from all across Maine! Well done Ron Hawes and fellow trustees !

Acton Fair August 26 – 29

Starting with the Cruise' N Car show on Thursday, Acton Fair offered four days full of agricultural enjoyment. 4-H showmanship in dairy, beef, rabbits and goats opened each day, while across the fairgrounds teams of steer and oxen were pulling in the pulling ring. As always the flower building was full of colorful house plants, arrangements and specialty category displays. The crowning of Miss Acton fair was the highlight of Friday evening. Congratulations to Roger Ridley and the directors of the York County Agricultural Association!

Piscataquis Valley August 26 – 29

The milking parlor, first in the state at a fair, is located right next to Susie's Ice Cream Bar. The best way to begin a tour of this fairgrounds is with a Gifford's ice cream cone from Susie's. Walking past many breeds of cattle, goats and sheep, fairgoers can look down into the valley and watch a variety of mechanical events. Youngsters look forward to the bike drawings and pedal tractor pulls. A favorite stop is the Dover-Foxcroft Fire Department museum and their firefighting equipment from the late 1800s to present day. Rusty Weymouth and the fair directors certainly put on a "down home country fair"! Great job!

IAFE ZONE 1 - KATHRYN HUNTER, DIRECTOR

Happy Autumn to all of our Fair Friends!

I know you are enjoying exploring some of our magnificent Maine Fairs ... me too! Plus, I have had the opportunity to visit some other fairs in our Zone 1.

My first stop was at the Saratoga County Fair in NY. This is the hometown fair of our previous Zone 1 YPI Director, Jen Flinton. I arrived on their opening Thursday where they charge no gate fee - they just let all the town folks enjoy the rides and the fair food and come together as a community. A very nice fair, with excellent support of their local services with a presentation by the NY State Police, a water rescue boat by the Sheriff's Department, a town Fire Engine, the National Guard, and a real live train that once serviced the area bringing folks to the race tracks. They also had a very cool chicken and egg house, life size, and very visible and interesting for the kids. I stayed a few miles away at the Saratoga Casino Hotel with a beautiful race track on its grounds. I must confess, I am bewildered by all the new, intricate, and confusing slot machines... no longer can you find one that looks for three 7's in a row!!! So, I saved some money at the casino and didn't stay long. The drive was a challenge for me. Let's put it this way, I sang plenty of songs and munched on lots of tic tacs to stay alert!



I then went to the Cornish Fair in NH. An absolute "gem" of a fair that was on my bucket list. I first met an older gentleman, Leland Atwood, way back in Las Vegas at the IAFE convention in 2010. He quite often shows up at a Zone 1 meeting and is usually the only one representing NH. He gave me a ride around the property in his John Deere 4 Wheeler that he WON as a door prize at the IAFE convention in 2015 !! His fair was beyond perfect. Busy, active, tons of animals, tractors, lots of Agricultural displays, and nestled in some tree lined

hills that were just gorgeous.

My next adventure brought me to the Marshfield Fair in MA on the way to Cape Cod. Bridget Burns, who also serves on the Massachusetts Fair Association is a Director at Marshfield. I have met her at many Zone 1 meetings and wanted to surprise her with a visit. This fair was amazing as well. Lots of historic displays, but some cool new events as well. As soon as I walked in I was greeted with the sounds (screeches) of dirt bikes racing around an impressive dirt track. They had an excellent 4-H display, and a huge exhibition hall. I also saw a lovely building just for bees and honey related items and information.

On my way "home", I took the LONG loop around to the Cummington Fair, in MA to visit Albert Judd, the Fair President. He also attends many Zone 1 meetings and is a new President of a small, but incredible fair nestled in the beautiful Berkshire mountains. Lots of local families and kids showing their animals, a stately, New England style exhibition hall, and even a cranberry bog display. Antique tractors were proudly arranged, the National Anthem greeted everyone, and the midway was active and busy. I spent the night at the lovely Hotel Northampton, and without knowing it at first, found out by my sister, that this is the SAME hotel my parents, Mac and Barbara Rupnow, stayed at on their honeymoon night on September 10, 1949, after getting married in Pittsfield a few miles away. Talk about a nostalgic moment!

My most recent stop was at the Champlain Valley Exposition in VT. My Zone 1 friend, Tim Shea, is the President and CEO of this spectacular fair, and I was blown away by its size, it's beautiful buildings, and it's huge variety of activities and informational booths. Strates Shows, from Florida, puts on an enormous carnival... biggest one I have seen, and the midway had the largest selection of yummy foods hands down! By the way ... where did the term "midway" come from? I once heard someone say it was halfway (midway) between the animal barns and the race track. Anyway, what an incredible fair and well worth the ride. I now feel like a true New Englander having crossed from Maine, across the White Mountains of NH to the gorgeous Green Mountains of VT all the way through some beautiful farm lands to Burlington. I stayed at the Hotel Essex, nearby, which is a Culinary School, where the students run the hotel and the restaurant. The front desk is behind a glass case of desserts, oh my. I may, or may not, have taken a piece of chocolate cake back to my room! 😊

So, I have been busy, and shhhhh, don't tell Tad, but I'm not done yet!!! I have lots more fairs to see, and I highly recommend that you all do some exploring of our Zone 1 fairs as well. It is worth it!!!

I hope you can join us for the IAFE convention in San Antonio. The details can be found at their website fairsandexpos.com.

See ya at the next midway ... I'll be the one eating cotton candy!

**THESE SHOES WILL BE HARD TO FILL
SONNY BLACK - LITCHFIELD FAIR**



Maine fairs are fortunate to have many hardworking, dedicated volunteers, some who have been around for several years. This issue we are highlighting a longtime volunteer from Litchfield Fair – Wilton “Sonny” Black.

Sonny Black is a man of few words, but many kind and generous actions. Found at the Black Farm on the Hallowell Road in Litchfield, Sonny is well-known throughout the Maine livestock world for his fair trades as a cattle dealer. Following in his father’s footsteps (Russell Black), Sonny has been a livestock dealer all his life.

His involvement with Litchfield Fair began years ago as a teenager, showing steers at the Litchfield Fair. Pretty soon the fair became a big part of his life, and he teamed up with Thomas Campbell to start Old McDonald’s Barn. Not long after, Jimmy Campbell joined the group, and for over 30 years, Sonny and Jimmy worked together overseeing the petting zoo in the barn. So many stories come from this partnership, like the little girl in pajamas sitting on a pot bellied pig or the many free grain cups handed out allowing children to feed the goats and other animals. Sonny always said that ‘for some kids this was the only chance they would ever have to get up close to farm animals’. Sonny would share livestock from his own farm in order to make sure that children could enjoy many breeds of young animals.

Folks who attended livestock auctions could find Sonny in the back row, watching over the many head of animals for sale on any given day. One favorite spot for him was to attend the 4-H Beef auctions held at many fairs. He has been known to add to the final selling price for youngsters who were unable to reach the amount that they had hoped for.

Ask folks what did Sonny Black give to our agriculture community and the answers always seem to begin with “the shirt off his back”. Hay bales for fairgoers to sit on during Litchfield Fair, help repairing the collapsed roof of the fair pulling ring, hayrides and cookouts for neighbors and friends, a petting zoo area for Richmond Day...even a hearty meal for hungry calves when they arrived late at night at the Black Farm. People and animals – a lifetime of making sure that they had what they needed. Never looking for anything in return. Just being Sonny Black.

Sonny’s wife Cindy, his son, and daughters all have much to be proud of, as do all of us in the Maine fair community, and for sure, “these shoes will be hard to fill”.



IN MEMORIAM



Ralph Gushee

September 18, 1936 - October 7, 2020

Obituary



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