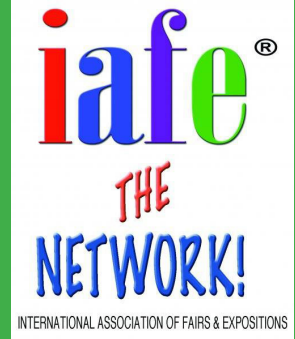




MAAF NEWSLETTER

2021 - ISSUE #1

JANUARY 2021



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Barry W. Norris



Good day all! As I sit here drafting this year-end report, I hope you have all had a great holiday season.

Looking back over 2020, I'd like to thank all of you for a very successful annual conference last January. It was well attended by all of our fair family and provided us with great feedback. Thanks again to all of the MAAF Board members and volunteers that assisted in making the event a great learning experience. As our fairs were preparing for the 2021 season, we were blindsided by the arrival of Covid-19. The uncertainty that followed was dealt with by all of you with great understanding and forward thinking. With MAAF having a hard-working and up-to-date IT committee, we launched our by-weekly video conference meet-

ings of the Fair Presidents and we have continued to have them on a monthly basis today. During these meetings, the Fair Presidents were able to discuss the important issues regarding fairs in 2020.

Once the Covid-19 restrictions were established at the State level, we continued to keep you all updated as procedures were put in place. I'd like to thank Missy Jordan for her assistance with linking the website(s) in keeping everyone informed.

When it was apparent that many fairs across the country were postponing their events, the IAFE membership created the concept of a virtual fair, which members of our MAAF IT committee embraced. They put together an informational Webinar for all of our fairs to view and implement. I'm proud to say several of you used the concept with great results, and it is still up on the MAAF website for all to review.

I am pleased to see that some of our fairs are in the process of preparing for the 2021 session. Your MAAF board has authorized the printing of the 2021 Fair Passes, and I will distribute them to the 130th Legislature for Ag. Day at the State House.

A reminder that the 2021 annual meeting is scheduled for January 23rd, starting at 11:00 AM with a guest speaker from the IAFE. After a short 15 minute break, we will begin the Annual meeting. The meeting will be available virtually for all to follow. We'll be posting the website for you to connect with a week prior to the meeting.

Thank you for all your innovative and collaborative work this past year. We have grown even stronger as a fair family as well as an organization. It continues to be my privilege to represent the men and women of the agricultural fairs of Maine.

Please be fair strong and positive for 2021.



Tom Foster, left, MAAF long time board member is retiring in 2021
tfoster32@roadrunner.com

Tom is the President of Windsor Fair

"Growing up, my family was always involved in Windsor Fair. I guess that, as a farm boy, I always had a passion for the agricultural part of the fair." Tom was involved in the administration aspect of Windsor Fair, becoming an officer in the fair in the early 1980s, and fair president in 1982. "My favorite parts of Windsor Fair are the horse pulling and cattle showing. The competition of showing animal vs animal is what I look forward to."

G. David Byras, Jr., right, MAAF Second Vice President
davidbyras53@gmail.com

Dave works with Litchfield Fair as the Show Ring Superintendent & Pittston Fair as the Pulling Superintendent & Fryeburg Fair as Security in the Horse Pulling Area

"I started going to agricultural fairs over 50 years ago. My favorite parts of the fairs are the horse shows and the pulling competitions. Through the years, I have been fortunate to develop great relationships with pullers and showmen across New England."

REPORTS - THE IAFE VIRTUAL VISION EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE 2020



*Kathryn R. Hunter
IAFE Zone 1 Director*

We had 28 educational sessions, with our Keynote Speaker, Amy Herman, "The Art of Perception," being the most well-attended session. Over 2,000 total live session attendees participated during our two-day event - November 30th and December 1st. We also had 58 exhibitors/vendors featured in the Marketplace. We had a lot of positive comments, including the following by Drew Tewksbury of McGowan Allied Specialty Insurance, one of our sponsors: "Virtual Vision was 'Red Bull' for my soul. I came away with energy and excitement for great things to come!"

We are very proud of one of the Graduates of the IAFE IFM class of 2020, being our very own Steve Graustein of Fryeburg Fair and a Director of the MAAF. Congratulations Steve!

Also, we were so pleased to hear that the Union Fair received a very high honor - the Judges Award for Non-Fair Facility Usage. Quite an accomplishment. Congratulations to all the folks at the Union Fair!

Our new Board of Directors for the IAFE was recently announced. Gene Cassidy of the Eastern States Exposition is the new IAFE Chair; Jeremy Parsons of the Clay County Fair, Iowa as 1st Vice Chair; and, newly appointed Jennifer Giesike of the Washington County Fair in Missouri as 2nd Vice Chair.



Steve Graustein, Fryeburg Fair

The 2021 IAFE Annual Convention and Trade Show is slated for Nov. 28-Dec.1 in San Antonio, Texas. We hope you can join us!

Kathryn R. Hunter, IAFE Zone 1 Director



Send us your photos & news! The MAAF Newsletter comes out every two months. Everyone wants to hear about your Fair! Thank you - Junia Norris (junianorris@gmail.com) or Rachel Andrews Damon (rdamon@roadrunner.com)

AWARDS - UNION FAIR RECEIVES THE 1ST IAFE AWARD FOR NON-FAIR FACILITIES USAGE

The IAFE (International Association of Fairs & Expositions) announced a new award this year - The Non-Fair Facilities Usage Judges Choice Award. And Union Fair won the award for 2020! An article follows telling about their process. Many congratulations to all our friends at Union Fair!

The Union Fair “Trail of Terror”

The Union Fair, located in Union, Maine, conducts an outdoor Halloween event, the “Trail of Terror,” on the fairgrounds annually in October. The event occurs on six weekend nights. Maine has relatively few large-scale Halloween events. The Trail was conceived to take advantage of the dearth of Halloween scare events, and benefits from use of the fairgrounds that allows us to control access and lighting. Our local competition comes from “Trunk or Treat” for little kids at the library, a homeowner sponsored one-night trick-or-treat trail in a nearby town, and “Fright at the Fort,” in Prospect, ME, about an hour away. We are the only event of a kind for Halloween-loving people in the local area. This is also the last chance for a “fun” outdoor attraction before cold weather sets in.

The pandemic was a significant obstacle for the 2020 event, and we knew we had to keep our members, our volunteers, and the public safe. To ensure safety, as cars entered the fairgrounds, they were confronted with a large sign that told visitors that we support Maine COVID advisories – with no exceptions! A member of the PenBay Hospital staff asked screening

COVID Precautions

- Screening
- Masks
- Social distance
- Car groups
- Enforcement

questions at a single entrance, issued numbers and contact forms, and turned away anyone with the wrong answers. At the ticket booth, we checked again for masks, and provided them free if needed. A beefed-up parking crew directed traffic and ensured that visitors stayed in or around their cars until their assigned numbers were called forward – to line up in specified locations, maintaining 10 feet between car groups. Car groups surrendered contact tracing forms at the start point, and were assigned an escort. At 90-second intervals an escort took a group onto

the Trail and followed them at a social distance. The parking crew and escorts, with assistance from uniformed Sheriff’s Patrol, enforced the rules.

The key to our success is always availability of volunteers, and this was especially important in 2020 since so many more were required to enforce COVID restrictions. Almost 100 volunteers, from high schools, theater groups, the Fair Society, and other Halloween-loving people, worked as planners, administrators, builders, and scare actors. Planning for the event started in February, when the core team developed the overall plan. Coordination with the State Fire Marshall’s Office and Maine COVID Advisory Committee followed.

Promotion started in May, when a volunteer designed a flyer, printed in bright colors and distributed at locations in all surrounding counties. Yard signs and banners followed, placed along roadways and at major intersections. We advertised on the Fair website and Facebook sites, the Trail of Terror Facebook site,



Snapchat, and Instagram. For Facebook, we purchased an enhanced advertising package to reach more potential visitors. We placed public service ads in newspapers and on radio stations. During the summer of 2020, we were unable to march in the Lobster Festival parade (with TV

coverage), 4th of July parade, or community celebrations in Union and other towns. Similarly, we were unable to advertise during the Union Fair, when members usually dress in costume to advertise and attract volunteers. Despite this, word got out and people volunteered.



In August we finalized the plans and started building sets for the scare stations. Some props, like those used for a toxic waste dump and a haunted forest, were very elaborate and required weeks to build. We installed thousands of feet of black plastic to shield the sets and hide the scare actors. Construction required special care, as we used barns that animals would use later. Everything was built with ease of removal and cleanup in mind.



The Trail was divided into scare stations, each with its own unique scares. Although the broad design was determined by the core team, each station had a unique designer and design. Some stations had “sub-designers” responsible for smaller displays in a single barn stall. Although props and animatronics are reused as much as possible, they are reused with a different theme year-to-year, and in different ways. Scarce resources, such as animatronics, black lights, and fog machines, were centrally managed, and shared or doled out to support the best individual plans. In 2020, visitors walked through an arcade, over a haunted bridge, through a pet cemetery, past a burning truck accident, through the haunted forest, carnival, vampire house,



witch coven, labyrinth, and clown park, all populated by scare actors well-briefed on personal and COVID safety. We used spider webs and fog, strobe lights and spooky music, and scare actors hidden behind curtains to “greet” our visitors. The Trail zigzagged through a forest of creepy trees, some of which were costumes and moved, past a selection of scare booths, some manned and others static displays. The Grim Reaper himself roamed the Alley,

accompanied by musicians on keyboard and electric guitar and by a fire spinner. Visitors passed vampires, witches, a toxic waste dump, and finally clowns, past animatronic scares, actors offering meals of entrails, and lots of fake blood. Scare actors were disguised as props and statues and caught visitors unawares as they passed. Escorts were charged with keeping scare actors at a distance between the visitors and actors.



At the end of the Trail, escorts walked visitors back to the parking area. During the walk, they sampled visitor responses, that varied from “too long” to “too short,” and “too scary” to “not scary enough,” but everyone reported a good time. Many visitors repeated the same night, and others made repeat visits on different nights. More than 120 visitors walked through the Trail every hour. We were pleased to find that many visitors traveled over an hour to attend the event.

For the two weeks following the event, crews cleaned and stored the props, removed and folded black plastic, and tore down new construction. Everything that could be reused was tucked away for the next event. The fairgrounds returned to normal until the next spooky season, and the Friends of Union Fair netted over \$11,000 to support fairgrounds maintenance and agriculture education.

EVENTS - OSSIPEE VALLEY FAIR HOSTS HALLOWEEN TRUNK OR TREAT & CHRISTMAS LIGHTS PARADE



From Donna Chapman, Ossipee Valley Agricultural Society:

The idea of hosting a Trunk or Treat was received with some skepticism by many fair members as they had never heard of such an event. I had however taken part in a few through Windham Parks and Recreation Committee.

The idea of holding one at the fairgrounds this year, was to try and give some normalcy back in their lives of our youth through Halloween, even if for just one night. Due to the fact our youth has lost out on so many things due to Covid-19, we decided to safely

proceed. Was I afraid of failing? YES! There was a lot of pressure on this event but the biggest challenge was to make sure the CDC Guidelines were applied to have a safe and successful event for the community.

The reason for this was two-fold. One, to make people aware of our fairgrounds in hopes that they may attend the fair next year, and secondly to give back to the community that supports us during the fair. The initial response to register vehicles was minimal. We had no idea how many would come for the Trunk or Treat. We had tremendous support in advertising for pretty much zero costs thanks to Saco River Community TV, Facebook and the Shopping Guide. The Trunk or Treat was a tremendous success. Some people had to wait in their cars 30 minutes or more just to drive through. It was so worth it, people followed the rules, some were disappointed they could not get out of cars, but the majority just kept thanking us as they drove out.

For Ossipee Valley Fairs first Trunk or Treat, I would say there were some hiccups, but it was a huge success.



TRUNK OR TREAT at the **OSSIPEE VALLEY FAIRGROUNDS**
291 SO. HIRAM RD., HIRAM

Saturday October 24
5 to 8 p.m.

Join Us for some Safe & Spooky Fun!
Community Invitation to help make Halloween FUN for the kiddos!

FMI: donna.chapman88@yahoo.com or CC: ashanor@oxfordcounty.org
DEADLINE TO SIGN-UP: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22 @ 5PM
Electricity available at your parking spot. CDC Guidelines apply See our Facebook page for details.



I highly recommend others fairs do the same in their communities next year. It is safe, minimal risk and a whole lot of fun for everyone. Next year we all realize we need much more candy, a bigger driving loop, get cars moving through earlier and hopefully double in size. We also need to remember to have a donation bucket for the fair. Truth be told it took a lot of fair members to get this off the ground and I want to say a sincere and heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped. We, as an Agricultural Fair Association Committee, had a successful first Trunk or Treat, and looking forward to safe fun in 2021.

From - Carol Doughty, Ossipee Valley Fair, cdoughty98@gmail.com



This past summer, when we had to postpone our Fair, a lot of folks in our community were extremely disappointed. They reached out to see if we would still be able to hold our Fair Parade. Folks stated that we could keep the vehicles separated and proceed. As an organization, we felt that this was just too early with too much unknown about the COVID-19 virus to even take that chance. After several meetings and extensive planning, a Christmas Lights Parade was planned and organized by Dave Paro. Dave is the amazing Ossipee Valley fair member who organizes several parades in this area but our Annual Fair Parade is by far the largest and most attended. The roads on the 2 1/2 mile stretch are lined up with spectators. When we announced that we were going to hold a Christmas Lights Parade, it was received with excitement and enthusiasm.



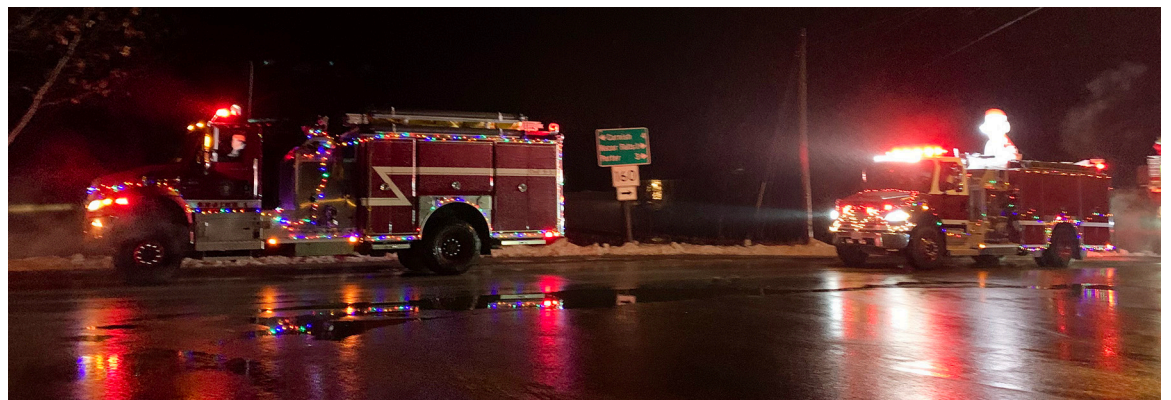
Along with this, Donna Chapman introduced the members to the idea

of a Tree Raffle. This required members to request businesses and organizations to sponsor a tree. The tree would be fully decorated and come complete with gifts for the winner. We were hoping to get 12 trees to represent the 12 days of Christmas. Sponsors were sought after and we ended up with 13 beautiful trees. The plan was to sell Tree Raffle tickets the first week of December and finish the week off by having the parade on December 5. Due to a snowstorm that day, that wasn't going to happen. We hit Facebook with a postponement announcement and rescheduled for the following weekend. This actually enabled us to open the Raffle ticket sales up for another week.

On December 12th, the weather forecast was for a cold rain starting about dusk (around 4pm - parade line up time). We were all holding our breath but the skies held it's tears, except for a slight drizzle. Yes we lost several of the floats that were planning on being in the parade but we did have a great turnout from a woman's JEEP club, several of the local fire departments, a couple of mini horses (decked out with twinkling light-up skirts) and quite a few other great vehicles. Flashing lights and sirens could be seen and heard for miles. Cheers came from the porches and out of vehicles parked along the parade route. Our Facebook page "blew up" with excitement and thank-you's! Santa was in the parade and rode on top of a firetruck. Once at the fairgrounds, he picked the winners of the tree raffle. All 13 trees were picked up and given a new home.



People were so happy to have something to see, something to hope for! So many folks have asked and stated that they hope that this becomes an annual event. All told we sold over \$1,300 in raffle tickets and also received over \$200 in cash donations. Our expenses were very minimal. Will we do this again? Absolutely! We've worked out some of the "bugs" and will be better organized next year. We reminded the folks in our community and beyond that the Ossipee Valley Fair is alive and well even though we could not have the actual fair in 2020. If this isn't something that the other fairs do, they should definitely consider it. The response was absolutely amazing.



REMINDER - MAAF SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE BY APRIL 29TH



MAINE ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL FAIRS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM

The Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs (MAAF) will be granting at least (2) \$1000 scholarships to Graduating High School Seniors. Our purpose and intention is to give recognition and financial assistance to the recipient in their quest in pursuing a post-secondary education in an Agricultural Related Field.

The MAAF scholarship committee will choose the recipients of these scholarships. The committee will make a decision based on the information provided from this application. The recipients will be announced in June. The monetary awards will be given after successful completion of the first semester of post-secondary education and proof of enrollment in a second semester.

Please provide the Scholarship Committee with the following information:

1. Briefly describe your post-secondary educational plans.
2. List all School, Community and Work Activities.
3. Briefly describe your connection or affiliation with a Maine Agricultural Fair
4. Attach a copy of your High School Transcript.
5. Mention any National Awards or High School Class Standings
6. Please use this Application as your Cover Page

Applicants Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

High School: _____

Date of Graduation: _____

Please Mail by April 29th, 2021 to:
MAAF Scholarship Application Committee Chair
Hope Ricker
8 Caston RD.
Pittston, ME 04047
or Email to hersec96@aol.com