



**OFFICIAL PROGRAM**

*A Special Publication of  
the Addison Independent*



**ADDISON COUNTY  
FAIR & FIELD DAYS**

**TUESDAY, JULY 29 - SATURDAY, AUGUST 2, 2025**



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## Welcome

The Addison County Fair & Field Days Board extends a cordial invitation to you, and your friends and family to come see what's happening at this year's Addison County Fair & Field Days on July 29, 30, 31 and August 1, 2, 2025. It is our pleasure to present the opportunity for area citizens to see what's going on in the agricultural world, enjoy the quality products and crafts that their neighbors have produced, and just have a grand time at the fair.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all who have attended in previous years, exhibited in the past, and look forward to seeing new, as well as past visitors, during our 2025 fair.

### Addison County Fair & Field Days, Inc.

1790 Field Days Rd, Vergennes, VT 05491

802-545-2557 (phone) • 802-329-2133 (fax)

Visit us at [AddisonCountyFieldDays.com](http://AddisonCountyFieldDays.com)

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510 Route 7 South Middlebury, VT 05753  
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## About this Field Days Program

Addison County Fair and Field Days draws folks from around the county and around the state to the fairgrounds in New Haven every summer. The fair draws more people than any other event in Addison County, and for good reason. The best farmers, sugarmakers, cooks and bakers compete for bragging rights — as do those brave men and women who get behind the wheel in the demolition derby and the tractor pull (not to mention the folks who work with the powerful draft horses and oxen). More often than not, the winners turn out to be our neighbors, or the folks down the road whom we see at the grocery store and at our kids' school concerts.

Kids with cows, calves, sheep, lambs — livestock of all kinds — work for weeks and months leading up to the fair, grooming their animals and running them through their paces for show-ring competition. Adults compete for the coveted Leona Thompson Bowl. Younger crafters try to earn the

Frances Monroe Youth Award.

Contestants young and old — and every age between — gather fruits and vegetables from the garden and sugar and spices from the pantry; then whip them up into a smorgasbord of jams, pickles, cakes and cookies for competitions in the Food Department.

There are exhibits, pulls (tractor, truck, horse, oxen and pedal-tractor), animal judging, horse shows, carnival food by the ton and plenty of fun and scary rides on the midway.

This booklet, which is filled with Addison Independent photographs from last year's fair, is designed to serve as a guide to Field Days. A complete schedule of events can be found as well as profiles of this year's entertainers.

Entertainment at the fair comes not just in the form of bands, dancers and a popular magician, but also includes the ever-popular armwrestling on Friday night. The popular karaoke contest returns, as does the Vermont Products Dinner.

There is plenty to see and do over the five days of the fair — July 29-Aug. 2. Don't miss any of it!

## Message to Superintendents

The *Addison Independent* will publish the results of many Field Days competitions. Event superintendents should take their results to the Field Days office immediately after the events. Field Days staff will make copies and the *Independent* will publish the information as quickly as possible.

Thank you!



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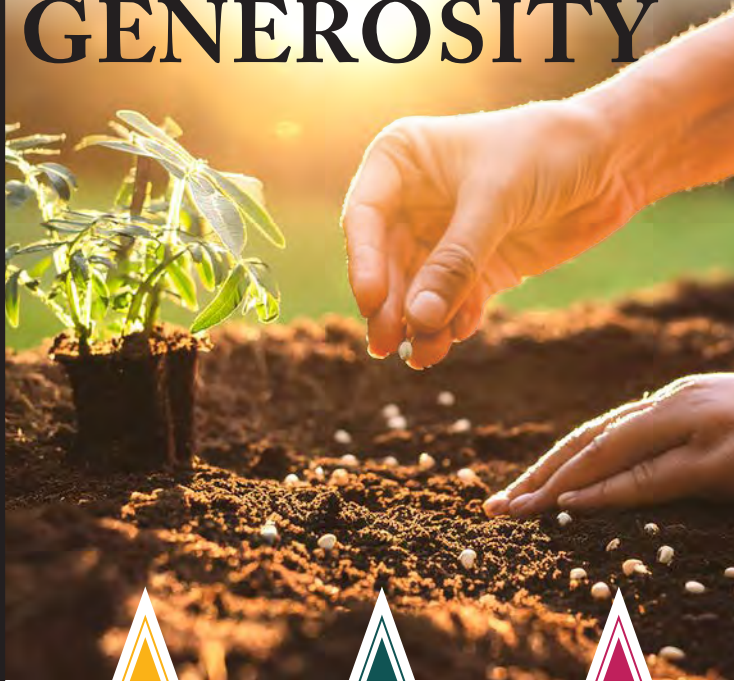
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## 2025 Admission

Your ticket price includes parking, gate admission, re-admission, grandstands, all Field Days shows & exhibits. Ticket office opens at 7:30 am.

### ADULTS (ages 12 and over)

Tuesday – Friday Daily Admission .....	\$15.00
Saturday Daily Admission.....	\$20.00
SEASON PASS .....	\$60.00
SENIOR DISCOUNT Free on Tuesday with Green Mountain Passport	

(Green Mtn Passports can be purchased at your local Town Clerk's office)

### CHILDREN (ages 6-11)

Daily Admission .....	\$5.00
SEASON PASS .....	\$20.00

**CHILDREN (5 years and under) FREE all days.**

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## 2025 Dedication



### John Zecher



This year the Board of Directors is dedicating our handbook to a past director and dear friend, John Zecher. John passed away this winter, but his work growing the Children's Barnyard at Addison County Fair and Field Days lives on to the delight of the many children who visit this special place every year at the Fair.

John served over ten years as a director of our fair and was always in charge of the Children's Barnyard. John contacted the owners of chickens, goats, pigs, calves, ducks, geese, rabbits, and miniature horses and donkeys. His efforts encouraged these animal owners to bring their critters to the Fair to exhibit in this favorite place for children. Petting areas were created, eggs were hatched, animals were fed, and pens cleaned, making this a space where kids could touch live farm animals and enjoy watching them up close and personal.

Even after John was no longer on the board, he could be found in the Children's Barnyard talking to the kids and parents and enjoying the animals himself. He also delivered Field Days posters and flyers to all the stores in Addison County, making sure that there would be plenty of people at the Fair to enjoy the animals.

John, we will miss your smile and your love of the Fair. Thank you for making the Children's Barnyard the favorite place it will always be.

**Tickets  
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# "The Taste of Vermont"

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Adults: \$15 Children 10 & under: \$8**



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Middlebury Inn in Middlebury, Pratt's Store in  
Bridport, the Field Days office  
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Beginning July 27th,  
tickets will only be available  
at the Field Days office.  
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Green Mountain Passport Day	Opening Day Parade 6:00PM	Sanctuary Band 7:00PM
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# Join Us in building the future of Addison County Fair & Field Days



Join us in reaching our goal of \$500,000!



Field Days is more than an agricultural fair; it is a hub for our community. Thousands of visitors attend each year to discover and celebrate the agricultural identity of Addison County. Your support in this capital campaign will ensure that Field Days remains a vibrant space for all.

Checks should be made payable to:  
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Please make a tax deductible donation today to our 501(c)(3) nonprofit.



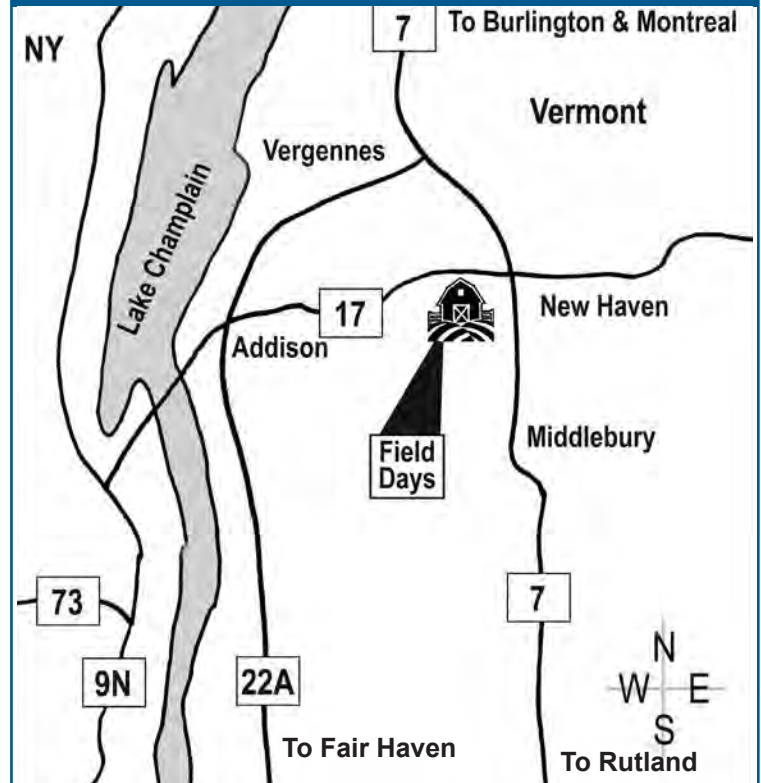


## 2025 Daily Activities

*Please Note: Most exhibits will be removed on Saturday night at 10:00.*

- 10am - 10pm ..... Children’s Barnyard Open
- 10am - 10pm .....4-H & Youth Building Open
- 10am - 10pm ..... Antique Equipment Building Open
- 9am - 9pm ..... Maple Sugar House Open
- 10am - 6pm ..... Twist O’ Wool Guild Demos  
(Twist O’Wool Guild tent)
- 10am - 10pm Forest Festival Exhibits & Demonstrations  
(forestry building)
- 10am - 10pm ..... Home & Garden Building Open with  
Continuous Craft Demos
- 10am - 10pm ..... Lucien Paquette Exhibit Building Open
- 10am - 6pm ..... NEW Chain Saw Artist Demonstrations
- 11am - 8pm ..... NEW Free Mini Golf  
Daily ..... Maple Products Demo (maple sugarhouse)
- 12pm - 12am ..... Midway Open (approximately)
- 1pm - 4pm ..... Milking Parlor Demonstrations

## How to get to Field Days



# Old & young alike appear in hand-mowing competition

By CAROLINE JIAO

Nearly every year since the late 1960s, the young and the old with a special loyalty to hand tools gather to show their skills at the Addison County Fair and Field Days hand-mowing competition.

On every “ready, set, mow!” a contestant lifts their scythe and ventures into the tall grass, and just minutes later, a strip of the field is left with clean stubs and freshly mowed hay.

Judd Markowski, one of the co-organizers for the past six years, performs as a lively and humorous emcee who uses his commentary to attract passing fairgoers to join the audience.

One may wonder about the use of these labor-intensive hand tools in modern days with various electric or fuel-powered machines — what’s the point of hand-mowing when a tractor can

perform the job so much faster?

Pau Schwartzkopf, a skilled contestant and a volunteer judge, has an answer.

“When my first-born son was a baby, I’d start the gas mower and it would wake him up. So I didn’t have time to mow because I was a new parent. When I did have time, he was napping, and I’d wake him up,” he explained his dilemma. “So I would play around with the scythe more and more when he was sleeping. Then I got pretty good at it. He’d be sleeping in the garden, and I could mow right around him and not wake him up.”

This was a dozen years ago, and now he only uses scythes to mow his property. The baby who enjoyed that serenity of hand-mowing rhythms competed for the first time this past summer.

Schwartzkopf is not the only one who brought his children



HANDMOWING VOLUNTEER ORGANIZER Judd Markowski shows how the craft is done while competitor Finn Yarborough waits his turn with scythe in hand at the Field Days Handmowing competition.

Independent file photo/Caroline Jiao

in 2024. Finn Yarborough of Ferrisburgh lined up with his three sons for their turns.

“The contest is a very supportive

place, and it’s a really fun place to learn,” Yarborough said.

His hand-mowing experience  
(See Handmowing, Page 21)



## Schedule of Events

### TUESDAY

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>8:30..... Western Only 4-H and Open Youth Junior Horse Show (Horse Arena)</p> <p>9:00..... 4-H Dairy Conformation Classes (animal show arena)</p> <p>10:30..... Antique Equipment Demos (Antique Equipment Area)</p> <p>11:00-8:00 ..... <b>**NEW This Year**</b> Mini Golf - FREE</p> <p>12:00 ..... Dig for Treasure! (Youth Activity Area - FREE)</p> <p>12:0..... Wheels of Ag Game Show (Dairy Area)</p> <p>12:00..... Pirate Man Dan (Show Tent)</p> <p>1:00..... Midway Opens (approximately)<br/>\$25 all day ride bracelets</p> <p>1:00..... Tom Joyce, The Magic Man (bandstand)</p> <p>1:00..... Circus Adventure (Entertainment Show Area)</p> <p>1:00-5:00 ..... Children's Activities (Child's barn yard) - Free</p> <p>1:30..... Antique Equipment Demos (Antique equipment area)</p> <p>1:30..... 4-H Hands on Workshop (4-H exhibit building)</p> <p>1:30..... Buffalo Barfield Unherd-of-Entertainment</p> <p>2:00..... Sheep Shearing/Handling Demonstration (sheep show tent)</p> | <p>3:00..... Pirate Man Dan (Show Tent)</p> <p>3:00..... Antique Equipment Demos (Antique equipment area)</p> <p>3:00..... The Silver Circus Show (Entertainment Show Area)</p> <p>3:00..... Wheels of Ag Game Show (Dairy Area)</p> <p>4:30..... Buffalo Barfield Unherd- of- Entertainment</p> <p>5:00..... Gymkhana (Horse Area)</p> <p>5:15 ..... Vermont Products Dinner 1st setting dining hall)</p> <p>5:30..... Wheels of Ag Game Show (dairy area)</p> <p>5:30..... Slate Valley Raceway RC Dirt race cars (Butterfield Arena)<br/>6 p.m. Vermont Products Dinner - 2nd setting (dining hall)</p> <p>6:00..... The Silver Circus Show (entertainment show area)</p> <p>6:00..... Field Days Opening Parade</p> <p>6:30..... Tractor Trivia - Strolling Game Show</p> <p>7:00..... G. Stone Motors Demo Derby (Tractor Pad)<br/><i>(See Schedule of Events on page 13)</i></p> |
|--|--|



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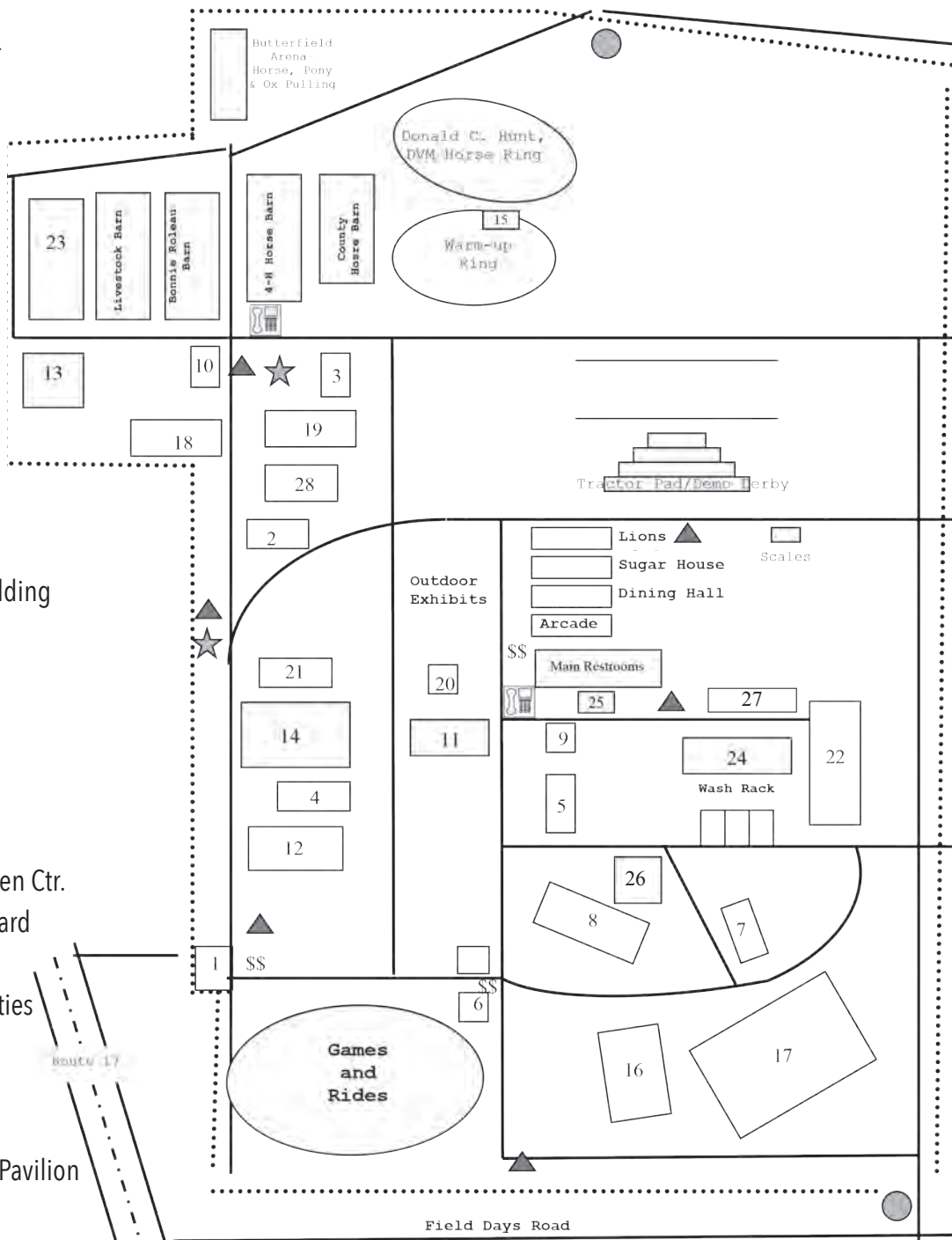


\* Based on EDA/UCC Data from 01/01/2018 - 12/31/2022 for sales of new compact tractors 0-200 Hp in states defined by the US Census as New England. (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.) \*Based on EDA tractor sales data of under 40 horsepower models from 2018 to 2022. © Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2024. Your Kubota Limited warranty gives you specific legal rights. You may have other rights which vary from state to state. Kubota Tractor Corporation does not authorize any person to create for KTC any obligation or liability other than that stated in the limited warranty. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For complete warranty, disclaimer, safety and product and incentive offer information, consult your local Kubota dealer and the Owner's Warranty Information Guide for the Kubota limited warranty on all products. Visit [KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers](http://KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers) for more information.



# Field Days Grounds Map

1. Jim Foster, Jr Welcome Center
2. Public Safety Building
3. Dusty Chuck 4-H Food Booth
4. 4-H Exhibit Building
5. Youth Food Booth
6. Field Days Main Office
7. Milking Parlor & Dairy Bar
8. Dairy Palace Arena
9. Bandstand
10. Twist O Wool Guild Tent
11. Picnic Pavilion
12. Show Tent
13. Handmowing Area
14. Lucien D. Paquette Exhibit Building
15. Horse Area Manager's Booth
16. 4-H Dairy Barn
17. Open Dairy/Beef Barn
18. Tractor Barn
19. Antique Equipment Building
20. Entertainment Show Area
21. Frances Monroe Home & Garden Ctr.
22. Sara McCarty Children's Barnyard
23. Sheep Tents
24. Pony Rides & Free Youth Activities
25. Infant Comfort Station
26. Addison County Toy Barn
27. Poultry Barn
28. Kelly James Natural Resource Pavilion



- ★ Restrooms
- Ticket Booths
- ☎ Phones
- \$\$ ATM
- ▲ Designated Smoking Areas



## Schedule of Events

Continued from page 10

- 7:00.....Local Band- tinyussmallus (bandstand)
- 7:00.....Local Band- Sanctuary (show tent)

### WEDNESDAY

- 8:30.....English Only 4-H and Open Youth Jr. & Sr. Horse Show (horse area)
- 9:00.....Open Dairy Show-Holsteins, Ayrshires, Milking Shorthorns (animal show arena)
- 9:30.....Ox Pulling (Butterfield Arena)
- 10:00-12:00 ...Children's Activities (children's barnyard area) - FREE
- 10:30.....Antique Equipment Demos (antique equipment area)
- 10:30.....Tractor Trivia - Strolling Game Show
- 11:00.....Tom Joyce, The Magic Man (bandstand)
- 12:00.....Midway Opens \$25 all day ride bracelets
- 12:00.....Pirate Man Dan (show tent)
- 12:00.....Dig for Treasure! (Youth activity area) - FREE

- 12:00.....Goat Show (sheep show tent)
  - 12:00 Wheels of Agriculture Game Show (dairy area)
  - 1:00.....Ladies Iron Skillet Toss (tractor pad)
  - 1:00.....The Silver Circus Show (Entertainment Show Area)
  - 1:30.....Antique Equipment Demos (antique equipment area)
  - 1:30.....4-H Hands on Workshop 4-H exhibit building)
  - 1:30.....Buffalo Barfield Unherd-of-Entertainment
  - 2:00-5:00 .....Children's Activities (children's barnyard area) - FREE
  - 2:00.....Sheep Shearing/Handling Demonstration (sheep show tent)
  - 2:00.....Juggling Workshop w/Silver Circus (entertainment show area)
  - 2:30.....Tom Joyce, The Magic Man (bandstand)
- (See Schedule of Events on page 14)*



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# Schedule of Events

Continued from page 13

- 3:00.....Wheels of Agriculture Game Show  
(dairy area)
- 3:00.....Antique Equipment Demos  
(antique equipment area)
- 3:00.....Pirate man Dan (Show tent)
- 3:30.....4-H Hands on Workshop  
(4-H exhibit building)
- 3:30.....The Silver Circus Show  
(Entertainment Show Area)
- 4:30 Buffalo Barfield Unherd-of-  
Entertainment (show tent)
- 5:00.....Youth Beef Clipping & Fitting  
Demonstration (animal show arena)
- 5:30.....Wheels of Agriculture Game Show  
(dairy area)
- 6:00.....The Silver Circus Show  
(entertainment show area)
- 6:30.....Tractor Trivia - Strolling Game Show
- 7:00.....Karaoke Talent Night with DJ Amanda

- Rock (signup at 6:30) (show tent)
- 7:00.....G. Stone Motors Demolition Derby  
(tractor pad)
- 7:00.....The VT Bluegrass Pioneers (bandstand)

## THURSDAY

- 8:00.....Annual ACFFD Open Horse Show  
(horse area)
  - 9:00.....4-H Dairy Fitting & Showmanship  
Classes (animal show arena)
  - 9:00.....4-H & Other Youth Sheep Show  
(sheep show tent)
  - 10:00.....Hand Mowing Contest  
(antique equipment demo area)
  - 10:00.....VTPA-Antique & Enhanced Antique  
Tractor Pulls
  - 10:30.....Pony Pulling (Butterfield Arena)
  - 10:30.....Antique Equipment Demos  
(antique equipment area)
- (See Schedule of Events on page 15)*



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## Schedule of Events

Continued from page 15

10:30..... Tractor Trivia - Strolling Game Show

11:00..... Pedal Tractor Pull (show tent)  
(sign-ups at 10:00)

11:30..... Tom Joyce, The Magic Man (bandstand)

12:00..... Midway Opens (approximately)  
\$25 all day ride bracelets

12:00..... Dig for Treasure!  
(Youth activity area) - FREE

12:00..... Wheels of Agriculture Game Show  
(dairy area)

1:00-5:00 ..... Children's Activities  
(children's barnyard area) - FREE

1:00..... The Silver Circus Show  
(Entertainment Show Area)

1:30..... Antique Equipment Demos  
(antique equipment area)

1:30..... Buffalo Barfield Unherd-of-Entertainment  
(show tent)

1:30..... 4-H Hands on Workshop

(4-H exhibit building)

2:30 Tom Joyce, The Magic Man  
(bandstand)

3:00..... Antique Equipment Demos  
(antique equipment area)

3:00..... Wheels of Agriculture Game Show  
(dairy area)

3:30..... 4-H Hands on Workshop  
(4-H exhibit building)

3:30..... The Silver Circus Show  
(Entertainment Show Area)

4:00..... Beef Showmanship/Fitting Show  
(Senior, Intermediate, Junior, & Novice)  
& Market Classes (animal show arena)

4:30..... Buffalo Barfield Unherd-of-Entertainment  
(show tent)

5:30..... Wheels of Agriculture Game Show  
(dairy area)

5:30..... Miniature Horse Team Hitching  
(See Schedule of Events on page 16)

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## Schedule of Events

*Continued from page 15*

- Demonstration (children's barnyard area)  
 6:00..... The Silver Circus Show  
 (Entertainment Show Area)  
 6:00..... Animal Costume Class  
 (animal show arena)  
 6:30..... Tractor Trivia - Strolling Game Show  
 7:00..... LTD (Living the Dream) (bandstand)  
 7:00..... G. Stone Motors Demolition Derby  
 (tractor pad) (tractor pad)  
 7:00-9:00 ..... Good-Time Line Dancing demo/  
 instruction (Show Tent)

### FRIDAY

- 8:30..... Exhibitors' Breakfast (dining hall)  
 9:00..... Open Sheep Show (sheep show tent)  
 9:00..... VTPA- Garden Division- Youth, Adult  
 Stock, Sport, Stock, ATV, Super Stock  
 Open, Pro Diesel, 4 Cyl Mods (tractor pad)  
 9:30..... Draft Horse Show (horse area)  
 10:00-12:00 ... Children's Activities  
 (children's barnyard area) - FREE  
 10:00..... Open Sheep Show (sheep show tent)  
 10:00..... Working Steer & Ox Show  
 (Animal Show Arena)  
 10:00..... Horse Pulling (Butterfield Arena)  
 10:30 Antique Equipment Demos  
 (antique equipment area)  
 10:30..... Tractor Trivia - Strolling Game Show  
 12:00..... Dig for Treasure!  
 (Youth activity area) - FREE  
 12:00..... Midway Opens  
 \$25 all day ride bracelets  
 12:00 Wheels of Agriculture Game  
 Show (dairy area)  
 12:00..... PeeWee Dairy Showmanship  
 (animal show arena)  
 12:15..... Buffalo Barfield Unherd-of Entertainment  
 (Show Tent)  
 1:00..... Tractor Trivia - Strolling Game Show  
 1:00..... Tom Joyce, Magician (bandstand)  
 1:00..... 4 Abreast, Show Division (horse area)  
 1:00..... The Silver Circus Show (Entertainment  
 Show Area)

- 1:30..... Antique Equipment Demos  
 (antique equipment area)  
 1:30..... 4-H Hands on Workshop  
 (4-H exhibit building)  
 2:00-5:00 ..... Children's Activities  
 (children's barnyard area) – FREE  
 2:00..... Magic Workshop w/Silver Circus  
 (entertainment show area)  
 2:45..... Buffalo Barfield Unherd-of Entertainment  
 (Show Tent)  
 3:00..... Future Showmanship/Fitting Class & Beef  
 Conformation & Group Classes  
 (animal show arena)  
 3:00..... Wheels of Agriculture Game Show  
 (dairy area)  
 3:00..... Antique Equipment Demos  
 (antique equipment area)  
 3:30..... 4-H Hands on Workshop  
 (4-H exhibit building)  
 3:30..... The Silver Circus Show  
 (Entertainment Show Area)  
 4:00..... Tom Joyce, The Magic Man (bandstand)  
 5:00..... Arm-wrestling-Kids 16 & under  
 (sign up at 4:00) (show tent)  
 5:30..... Wheels of Agriculture Game Show  
 (dairy area)  
 5:30..... Miniature Horse Team Hitching  
 Demonstration (children's barnyard area)  
 6:00..... The Silver Circus Show  
 (Entertainment Show Area)  
 6:00..... VTPA- Street Stock, Mod Trucks, 2WD  
 trucks, Hot Farm & Altered Farm  
 7:00..... Arm-wrestling-Adults (weigh-ins 5:00pm)  
 (show tent)  
 7:00..... Blues and Beyond Band (bandstand)

### SATURDAY

- 9:00..... Open Dairy Show- Jersey, Brown Swiss  
 & Guernsey  
 9:30..... Draft Horse Show (horse area)  
 9:00..... VTPA-Farmstock, Open 4WD, Hot Farm,  
 SS 4x4, Altered Farm, St Legal Semi,  
 Single Engine Mod Pulls (tractor pad)  
*(See Schedule of Events on page 18)*



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## Schedule of Events

Continued from page 16

- 10:00-12:00 ... Children's Activities  
(children's barnyard area) - FREE
- 10:30..... Antique Equipment Demos  
(antique equipment area)
- 10:00..... Youth and Other 4-H Sheep Show
- 12:00..... Midway Opens (approximately)  
\$25 all day ride bracelets
- 12:00..... Baked Bean Contest & Samples  
(picnic pavilion)
- 12:00..... NYTPA = SS, 4x4, 4.1 Tractors & Super  
Farm and Limited ProTractor pulls  
(tractor pad)
- 12:30..... Tom Joyce, The Magic Man (bandstand)
- 1:00..... Backwoods Gun & Tackle Sling Shot  
Competition (sign up at 12:00)  
(Butterfield Arena)
- 1:00..... Six Horse Hitch, North American Classic  
Six Qualifier (horse area)
- 1:00..... The Silver Circus Show

- (Entertainment Show Area)
- 1:30..... Youth Poultry Show (Bandstand)
- 1:30..... Antique Equipment Demos  
(antique equipment area)
- 1:30..... 4-H Hands on Workshop  
(4-H exhibit building)
- 1:30..... Buffalo Barfield Unherd-of-Entertainment  
(Show Tent)
- 2:00-5:00 ..... Children's Activities  
(children's barnyard area) - FREE
- 2:00..... Clown Workshop w/Silver Circus  
(entertainment show area)
- 2:30..... Backwoods Gun & Tackle Turkey Calling  
Contest (Butterfield Arena)
- 3:00..... 4H & Other Youth Poultry Showmanship  
Children's Barnyard area)
- 3:00..... Antique Equipment Demos  
(antique equipment area)
- 3:30..... Backwoods Gun & Tackle Duck & Goose  
*(See Schedule of Events on page 19)*

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Walgreen's

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## Schedule of Events

Continued from page 18

- Calling Contest (sign up at 2:30)  
(Butterfield Arena)
- 3:30.....Tom Joyce, The Magic Man (bandstand)  
Presentation (home & garden building)
- 3:30.....4-H Hands on Workshop  
(4-H exhibit building)
- 3:30.....The Silver Circus Show  
(Entertainment Show Area)
- 4:00.....4H & Open Youth Rabbit Show  
(Dairy Palace Arena)
- 4:30.....Buffalo Barfield Unherd-of-Entertainment  
(show tent)
- 5:00.....Home & Garden Awards  
& Leona Thompson Bowl
- 5:30.....Miniature Horse Team Hitching  
Demonstration (children's barnyard area)
- 6:00.....The Silver Circus Show  
(Entertainment Show Area)
- 6:00.....NYTPA = SS, 4x4, 4.1 Tractors & Super

- Farm and Limited ProTractor pulls  
(tractor pad)
- 7:00.....Dance Party w/ DJ Jamman (bandstand)
- 7:00.....Vermont's own 40th Army band  
-IRON SIGHTS- rock band (show tent)
- 7:00.....NYTPA - Sanctioned Super Farm &  
Limited ProTractor Pulls (tractor pad)
- 9:15.....Farm Credit East Closing Fireworks  
Display (set off east of horse area)



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# Family embraces the tradition of horses and Gymkhana

By CAROLINE JIAO

On the first evening of Addison County Fair and Field Days, horses are quickly lined up behind the warm-up ring gate, ready to gallop.

Loyal horse-lovers eagerly fill the seats, waiting for the once-per-year Gymkhana, which is an equestrian competition of timed speed pattern racing that includes racing around barrels, pole bending and much more.

For the past 13 years, Lori Brown, a rider who grew up in Ferrisburgh and lives in Middlebury, has been staging this event at the county fair, and it now attracts over 40 participants.

The competition is usually divided into age groups of children below 10 years old, juniors between ages 11 and 17, and adults. The day saw several youngsters, one of them a preschooler, giddy up in the ring, circling around barrels with agility and lightning speed.

"I really love that it's for all ages and levels. The whole family could do it," Brown said.

Brown was a toddler herself when she was first taught to ride. Now she has over 30 years of equestrian experience.

Relationships with horses now reach the fourth generation in the family. Lori was quick to admit that her passion has passed



A FAMILY OF riders at Field Days continues to uphold the tradition of Gymkhana, riding competitions consisting of speed pattern racing and timed games. They all have been riding their whole lives and look forward to future competitions in barrel racing. From left are Emma, Lori and Kassidy Brown with their horses Toby, Faith and Jet.

onto her two daughters, Emma and Kassidy Brown, who were also fierce contestants both at the event on opening night last year and at the National Barrel Horse Association. In fact, they had enjoyed a recent trip to a big competition in Syracuse, N.Y.

"My highlight is being able to compete with my girls, like going to places together," Lori said.

Emma Brown, 19 at the time of this interview, has been working in barrel racing since she was 14, at which age she won the Vermont NBHA title, which was not com-

mon at all at that time. Two years later, she won again in the New York NBHA.

"That was pretty fun," she said.

Her sister Kassidy, 17, also started riding at a young age.

"I started riding before I could sit up," she said. "I've been riding my whole life."

She was 10 when she first got her horse, Jet, who was three years old at the time. The intimate bond that developed through years of training is one of the highlights of Kassidy's riding career.

"I had to train him, learn to trust

him, let him do what he's doing," she said.

Emma shares her sentiment.

"I would say, it's a love-hate relationship," she said, petting her horse buddy Toby. "He's a great horse. I've learned a lot from him."

Lori is glad to have made Gymkhana a tradition at the fair. The story will continue.

"I just remember riding on one of my grandfather's friend's horses, and it was just an instant reaction ... like it was in my blood," she said.

Independent file photo/Caroline Jiao

## Good Luck to all Participants!

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# Handmowing

(Continued from, Page 9)  
started with a friendship with the Markowski family when he and his wife moved to Ferrisburgh 15 years ago. He has been honing his skills since.

There are not only young faces but also familiar elderly ones. According to Markowski, “They just keep showing up, year after year.”

Marc Shattuck was one of the two competing in the senior category. He zoomed through his field in less than two minutes. With more than 40 years of practice, he made it look so easy.

“I’m 70. I used to be faster,” he told a young reporter.

If a person not familiar with the history of the county fair looks closely at a sign-up sheet for the mowing contest, they’d discover Shattuck’s father’s name, Rodger Shattuck — the seniors category for people age 80 and older is

named after the elder Shattuck.

“My father was a professor, so I grew up around all these professors, which was great, because they had all these ideas, but I couldn’t figure it out when I was young,” Shattuck recalled. “I just want to work with my hands.”

And that he did. Now a skilled welder, Shattuck had built his scythe with metal, which is deceptively light. The snath is made of steel, and he uses an aluminum weld to sharpen the blade.

Why does he go to all the work?

“Because I can,” he said proudly.

Markowski confirmed that the individual mower’s scythe is supposed to suit their body.

“Everybody has their completely own way of doing it,” he said.

For many, scything brings them closer to the natural environment and the land, providing a sense of inner peace that they seek.

Michaela Stickney, co-organizer

with Markowski, is one who finds the soothing power of handmowing inspiring.

“It’s very meditative, it’s very peaceful. I feel good having a hand tool and using it instead of using electricity or gas,” she said. “The grass is my teacher. I like to connect with the earth. I like to get up early in the morning to feel the grass between my toes. It’s honoring the planet. It’s also great exercise.”

Schwartzkopf feels similarly. Apart from the quietness, it’s the bond with the land that brings him to his scythe.

“It brings a greater connection to the land because as I’m mowing, I’ll see things like volunteer plants I want to keep. like I’ll hit a patch of wild strawberries and I’ll just mow around it,” he said.

The entire contest lasted six hours. People continued to clap and cheer for each contestant as if it was their turn. At the end

of the day, it was less about the competition, and more about the mutual learning between the young and the old.

Last summer, Stickney taught two workshops, one at the Bread and Puppet Theater, and another at the Middlebury College organic garden (The Knoll). The four Knoll summer interns also made it out to the field and competed last year, each taking a badge home.

“Maybe we just want to keep things alive for whatever reason,” Markowski said. “Maybe that’s what the whole fair is dedicated to.”

Many agree with this observation.

“It’s one of those lost arts that isn’t actually lost,” Yarrowborough said. “It’s a special opportunity to be part of something very, very old.”

Or, to put it simply as Schwartzkopf did, “For anybody who hasn’t tried it, they should try it!”

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# Smash! Bang! Cars get banged up – on purpose – at the fair

By ANDY KIRKALDY

When the members of the Vergennes Fire Department reacted quickly to put out the second engine fire in Chance Mahoney's battered dark sedan, that left only one vehicle running out of the 25 that started the action-packed, deafening and rain-soaked finale on the third and final night of the G. Stone Motors Demo Derby at the 2024 Addison County Fair and Field Days.

That gray sedan, topped off with a "Tinker Tierney" sign, belonged to Brandon Tierney. And he walked away with \$3,500 for dishing out and taking bone-jarring blows in two heats leading up to the finale.

Drivers qualified for the compact car finale by managing to survive heats on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday as one of the final two drivers running, or by being named the "Mad Dog" driver by announcer Kylie Martell. To earn that honor a driver must be the most aggressive behind the wheel in the first two minutes of a heat.

The Field Days Demo Derby last August also offered heats for V-8s, minivans and pickups, but those larger rides weren't allowed to compete for the big bucks in the compact final.

Before the finale began, organizers called for a front-loader to scrape mud and water off the surface of the track, a move that gave the cars more traction than the almost helpless minivans in the heat that came just before it.

As a result, despite the crowded and still slippery arena, the 25 drivers got after each other.

Among those who were notable for aggressive driving behind the wheel — at least to an observer trying to keep track of the mayhem through the smoke and steam — were Mahoney, who as well as finishing second



BRANDON TIERNEY, DRIVING with a Tinker Tierney sign, earned \$3,500 by winning the compact car feature at the Field Days Demo Derby. He dodged this dust-up in a qualifying heat, but drove aggressively in that heat and in the finale.

Independent file photo/Steve James

earned the Mad Dog award; Tyler Hebert, whose car announced, "It's a girl"; Alexis Whitney; Trey Daniels; Aiden Putnam, aka "Ice Cold"; Nick Ouellette; Kyle Bianchi and Carter Markwell.

Other competitors couldn't be identified by cross-checking car numbers with names provided by organizers, but we saw you, drivers of 26, 48X and 98X — you all showed up to dance.

One driver was too aggressive and was disqualified for violating the rules (yes, there really are rules, especially limiting special preparation of the cars). His violation was hitting drivers' doors, a dangerous move, once too often. The driver, whose name is omitted here to protect the guilty, protested, and on the way out during the stoppage in the action he exchanged gestures and pleasantries with derby fans behind the fence.

In the demo enclosure, one by one the cars broke axles, suffered from overheated engine, or had wheels fall off, and they lay

dead in the mud, leaving just three cars running: Ouellette's, Mahoney's and Tierney's. Also running regularly were Vergennes firefighters. The fourth car running was 98X, and action stopped while firefighters ran to snuff the blaze, and then there were three.

Ouellette's white sedan gave up the ghost shortly after that, and that left Mahoney's dark sedan and Tierney's gray sedan to duel for the big payday. Mahoney gave Tierney's ride a couple shots, and then they met head-to-head, but not too hard, up against the concrete blocks on the far side from the grandstand.

Flames shot up from Mahoney's hood. Firefighters sprang back into action and put it out. But when the two cars clashed again, another fire started in Mahoney's engine. Back came the firefighters: The battle was over, and the trophy was Tierney's. The two drivers popped out of their cars and embraced as rain

continued to fall.

## EARLY HEATS

The Demo Derby ran three preliminary heats before the big compact car finale. In an active Compact Heat One, Kyle Bianchi and Bubba McPhee drove hard and qualified for the finale as the drivers of the last two cars running, while Trey Daniels earned the Mad Dog nod.

Also making impacts in the heat were Ross Whitney, Landon Lathrop and Chuck Haven.

Ten competitors squared off for the Compact Heat Two. Bridget Sheppard and Logan Boyer qualified for the finale as the last running, while Logan Many was named the Mad Dog driver.

Also delivering crowd-pleasing thumps were Reid Lumbr, Chance Mahoney, "Bad Dog" Dylan Mason, and Ricky Stalcup, whose car claimed, "If you ain't first, your last." Sadly, according to that logic Ricky joined another seven heat drivers in last.

The card also ran a five-vehicle  
(See Demo Derby, Page 24)



# Shearing sheep is a workout, takes years to develop skills

By CAROLINE JIAO

As the clock hit on the first day of the Addison County Fair & Field Days this past summer, kids and adults alike rush to the sheep tent in the northeast corner at the Fairgrounds.

Soon, the human voices quiet down, and all attention is directed toward one black sheep who, stubbornly baaing, is gently led to the center of the tent.

A moment later, added to the symphony of sheep's bleating is the buzzing sound of a shearer.

Siri Swanson, a professional shearer based in Bridport who's holding the hissing electric contraption, assures her audience that this practice is completely safe, and perfectly necessary, for domesticated sheep breeds.

Swanson tells her audience that shearing is essential to removing potential bacteria and diseases from domestic sheep. Indeed, through the thousand years of human animal husbandry, sheep

have been bred precisely to not shed as much hair as their wild counterparts, so their wool can be transformed into sweaters, scarves and socks.

Shearing requires a deep knowledge of the animal's anatomy because male and female animals require slightly different approaches. Swanson explains to the audience that getting the sheep into a sitting position helps it to calm down, and it makes shaving its belly much easier.

It took Swanson a long moment to run the sheers across all of the sheep's belly. Due to last year's wet weather, the wool that's often in contact with the ground when sheep lie down becomes more clotted and difficult to shear, and dampness in general reduces wool quality.

"Wool doesn't love moisture, so if it gets really damp all the time, it never gets to dry out so that's hard," she said. "It could" *(See Sheep shearing, Page 25)*

## Demo Derby

*(Continued from, Page 23)*  
minivan heat that was as exciting as listening to a pitch for investing in Bitcoin. It wasn't the drivers' fault, but a hard rain struck just before the heat was set to begin, and the minivans might have well been novices on ice skates.

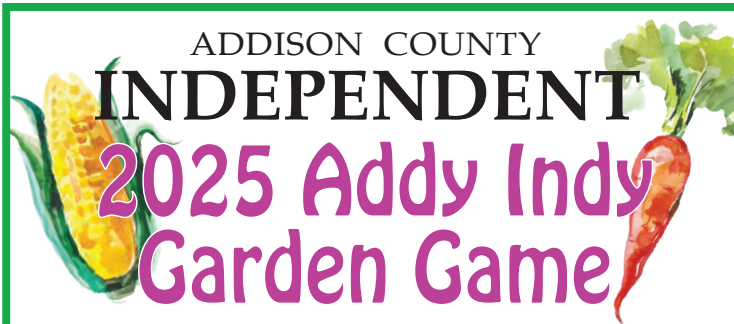
Despite the drivers' best intentions, rain drops were hitting the minivans harder than they were hitting each other. It was an open question if the vans would run out of gas before they could do enough damage to knock each other out of commission. One couldn't even move in the mud, and another, actually a rainbow-colored SUV, made it about 50 feet to the right before getting

bogged down next to the concrete blocks.

Given the pouring rain and lack of both action and shelter, most fans headed for dryer places on the fairgrounds while the minivans churned in the mud.

Finally a third van stopped running, and after a few more harmless love taps organizers persuaded the last two drivers, Nick Ouellette and Josh Kennett, to split the winner's share. Ouellette won the Mild Dog, er, Mad Dog award.

Look for the G. Stone Motors Demolition Derby next Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, July 29-31, starting at 7 p.m.



Each summer the Addy Indy and Agway partner to present the Garden Game, awarding prizes for the largest entries in each of the fruit and veggie categories below:

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Cantaloupe (circumference)	Potato (length x circumference)
Carrot (length x circumference)	Pumpkin (circumference x circumference)
Cauliflower (diameter)	Radish (circumference)
Corn (length x circumference)	Rhubarb (length)
Cucumber (length x circumference)	Rutabaga (circumference)
Edible Leafy Greens (length x width - leaf only)	Summer Squash (length x circumference)
Eggplant (circumference x circumference)	Sunflower (diameter)
Fennel (length x circumference)	Tomato (circumference)
Green Bean (length)	Turnip (circumference)
Kohlrabi (circumference)	Winter Squash (length x circumference)
Leek (length x circumference)	Zucchini (length x circumference)



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# Sheep shearing

*(Continued from, Page 24)*

affect the sheep's health too. The wet environment changes their feet quality and increases pest issues."

Swanson's passion for shearing traces back to Field Days itself. She attended its 4-H sheep and goat camp, and later she went to the State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill for animal science. Those efforts manifested years later into a professional occupation. She now shears sheep around New England, New York and the Midwest.



"I got to know other shearers and everyone in the industry," she said. "There happens to be a big demand for shearers, so I just found my way to it."

Swanson said she enjoys her work deeply, feeling a genuine sense of connection with the land and the people, and of course, the sheep.

During the busy shearing season, mostly lasting from March to June, she starts the day at around four or five a.m., packs up all the gear, and gets on the road. She stops at anywhere from two to seven farms a day and shears 20 to a hundred sheep.

"Just farm after farm shearing," she said with a smile.

One might wonder why, if the bulk of shearing season is in the spring, there are still quite a few furry buddies lined up to get their hair cut at the summer county fair.

Well, the one sheep shorn at last year's fair was born just a few months earlier.

"He would've been a baby-baby during shearing season," Swanson explained. "You can shear them when they're seven or eight months old. It depends if you want the fleece off of it."

According to Swanson, spring and fall are generally the busiest seasons, and different shearing plans also arise depending on the animal's production schedule — when the sheep are lambing:

"There's so many different



PROFESSIONAL SHEARER SIRI Swanson, based in Bridport, demonstrates sheep shearing at the sheep tents during the 2024 Field Days. Her passion for working intimately with farm animals can be traced to her 4-H sheep and goat camp. A six-month-old black sheep here experiences her skillful haircut.

Independent file photos/Caroline Jiao

reasons to decide when to shear."

For Swanson, one of the biggest challenges for her work is about the muscles.

"It's so physical. That's hard starting off; and sustaining yourself. You have to seriously take care of your body, nutrition, all that."

It was also a challenge at first to learn and recite all the details about her gears.

"There's not a lot of sheep shearer repairmen around, so

I have to know all my gear backwards and forwards, to be able to do repairs on the road, all that stuff," she said.

As more audience members trickled in for a second round of demonstration, Swanson quickly got herself, and the sheep, prepared. She is glad that her work brings her in contact with the local farming community.

"I get to meet all kinds of people and see farms all over the place, which is amazing," she said.

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# FIELD DAYS ENTERTAINMENT

In some sense, Field Days is nothing but entertaining. With engaging agricultural shows and displays, competitions and routine events that fairgoers look forward to and practice for all year, thrilling rides, people to meet, food to sample and animals to admire, Field Days offers amusement for almost everyone.

For those who want to be entertained from the stands rather than in the

ring, this year's fair will certainly not disappoint. The lineup is packed with classic favorites ranging from the annual opening parade to karaoke, clowns and magicians, Rosie's racing pigs and closing fireworks. Musicians will perform '90s rock, classic rock, blues, bluegrass and more. Plus there will be line dancing in which everyone is invited to join in.

There are several acts sprinkled around the fairgrounds that repeat multiple times this week, so if you miss the first one, come back the second or third time.

What follows is a review of some of these acts and short profiles of entertainers that you'll want to check out at this year's fair.

One act returning from last year that you should make time to see is the **Silver Circus**, starring variety artist Andrew Silver. The act features a unique blend of magic, juggling and physical comedy. You'll be delighted by his humorous, high-spirited showmanship, mystified by his astonishing magic, and his dexterity is guaranteed to take your breath away. He's doing more than a dozen shows during the week, including a juggling workshop on Wednesday afternoon and a clowning workshop on Saturday afternoons. Check out the schedule for the performances in the entertainment show area.

On the musical front, Field Days will fea-



**TINYUSSMALLUS**

ture six Vermont bands, and a couple of those are new to the fair.

The first of the newbies is **TinyusSmallus** on Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the bandstand. Loud, proud and stuck in the '90s, you can bust out your flannel and crank up the dial for this Burlington band, which promises to bring back the best decade in rock that'll have you jumping like it's 1999. Think of crunchy guitars, big choruses and enough nostalgic vibes to make your Walkman jealous. Whether you're reliving your glory days or discovering the magic of 1990s rock for the first time, TinyusSmallus guarantees a good time and a loud time with absolutely no apologies!

That same night and time in the show tent will see the return of **Sanctuary**, which was well received at Field Days last year. This quartet featuring Lori Towle, Tom Lawson, Jerry Cloutier and Mark Steffenhagen will entertain you with rock and more from the '80s. You want dance covers — they've got 'em.

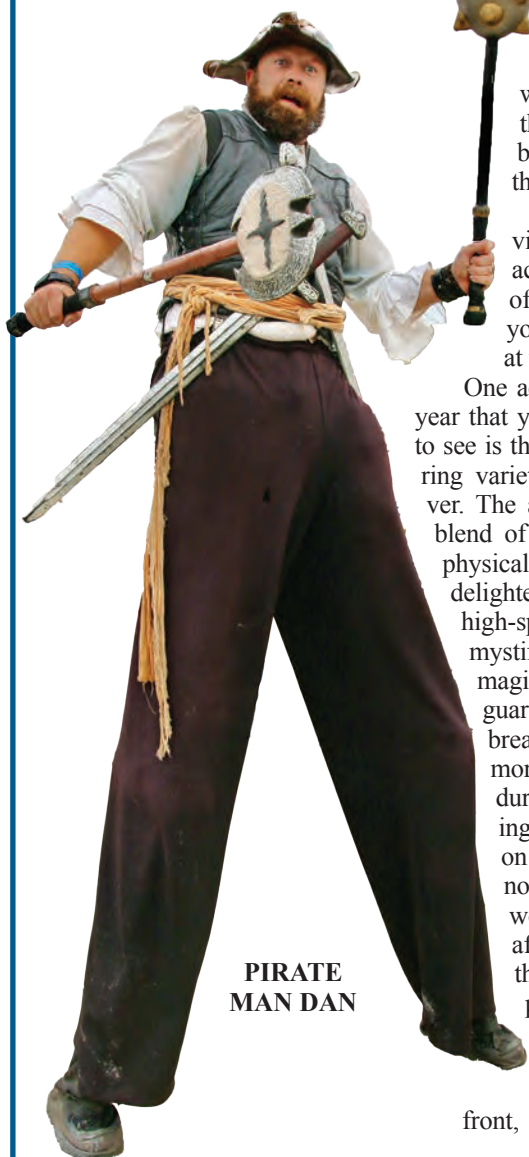
Wednesday evenings musical centerpiece will be the **VT Bluegrass Pioneers** performing at the

bandstand at 7 p.m. It will feature the band's signature hard-driving style of bluegrass music, with a dynamic mix of old and new songs. The Pioneers formed in 2016 when four veteran Vermont performers joined forces to blend their considerable instrumental and vocal talents into a cohesive, polished and thoroughly enjoyable ensemble. Banjo Dan and Willy Lindner, founding members of Banjo Dan and the Mid-Nite Plowboys, got together with Danny Coane, celebrated lead singer for the Starline Rhythm Boys and a long-time bluegrass man, to form a band dedicated to restoring authentic traditional bluegrass to the Vermont scene. Former Plowboy Sam Blagden joined to play bass and sing tenor. The quartet has been performing for nearly a decade, winning fans wherever they play.

"I lived in Addison County for several years and still make it a point to come back for the Fair every year," Dan Lindner said. "It will be a real treat for me and my boys to take the stage at my favorite Vermont fair this year."

Whenever The VT Bluegrass Pioneers take the stage you can

*(Continued on, Page 28)*



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# FIELD DAYS ENTERTAINMENT

count on a lively show full of fun and great bluegrass music.

Another band new to Field Days will take the stage in the bandstand tent at 7 p.m. on Thursday. **Living the Dream**, known as **LTD**, is a Champlain Valley band, and their message is simple: Get ready to rewind, relive and rock out! LTD isn't just another cover band; they're a time machine fueled by infectious energy and incredible playlists. They specialize in delivering a set packed with the greatest hits from the '80s all the way to today. Songs you heard on the radio last week, followed by that

one hit you completely forgot existed but instantly brings you back to a specific memory. The songs that defined eras, the ones you cranked up in your car, and the ones you danced to until the early hours. LTD will play songs that have the amazing power to unlock forgotten memories!

If you're looking to get moving in a different way on Thursday night, head to the Show Tent for **Good Time Line Dancing** from 7-9 p.m. Instructor Andrea Warren has been getting people up and dancing for a decade. She starts with a warm-up dance (maybe the Cupid Shuffle).



IRON SIGHTS

Then she teaches a beginners dance, and reviews a little more complicated dances. During an "open dance floor" she leads a variety of dances, sometimes very beginner and sometimes more advanced — it depends on the group. In any case — you will move.

Also back for a second year at Field Days will be **Blues and Beyond**, which takes the bandstand stage at 7 p.m. on Friday. Led by Danny Roda in South Royalton, Blues and Beyond brings positive energy and great songs to the stage, infusing blues, jazz, soul, and dance rock favorites.

You'll have another chance to dance on Saturday evening,

when DJ Jamman hosts a dance party at the **Dance Party** at the bandstand at 7 p.m.

The final band to take the stage at the fair will be Vermont's own **40th Army band, Iron Sights**, which will be in the show tent at 7 p.m. This dynamic rock band is comprised of seven soldiers from Vermont's own 40th Army Band. Touring throughout the state, Iron Sights delivers a performance featuring a high energy blend of classic '80s and '90s rock, infused with elements of R&B for a unique sound. The soldiers proudly represent the Vermont Army National Guard through their music and will offer a show that resonates with  
*(Continued on, Page 29)*

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# FIELD DAYS ENTERTAINMENT

audiences of all ages.

If you're looking for new entertainment options that don't play guitars, Field Days 2025 has got 'em.

One is a farm-based trivia show called **Wheels of Agriculture**. It is an audience interactive game show that takes place on a stage. The format is trivia-based game play in which the person who can answer a randomly selected question gains points. The questions are primarily agricultural-based and include topics such as: Local Agriculture, Animals, Plants, Food Groups, Farm and barnyard, music and other sounds. Look for the show times in our schedule of events. And they are bringing along a strolling tractor with **Tractor Trivia**, which is also in the schedule.

Another fun new addition to Field days is the **Portable Mini Golf Company**. This is a nine-hole mini-golf course that has been set up at hundreds of events across New England and New York.

And **Northwoods Chainsaw Sculptures** will set up near the sawmill and will have various demos each day throughout the

week. You've got to see the artistry they create with a chainsaw.

Just about everywhere you turn there will be some sort of entertainment act going on.

Here are some special things to look for:

- The **Field Days Opening Parade** steps off from near the tractor pad at 6 p.m. on Tuesday. This year's theme is "Country Pride, Country Wide." All entrants are asked to assemble 45 minutes before the parade start time on the east side of the tractor pad on the road to the north of the parking area. There will be prizes for the winning entries. Contact Benj Deppman at 724-1381 or any Field Days director if you plan to participate. Maybe you should march in the parade: Ribbons for the top three winning entries.

- Head to the Show Tent on Wednesday at 7 p.m. when Addison County DJ Amanda Rock will lead the ever-popular **Karaoke Talent Night**. Amada will help get the energy flowing so you all can let your inner performer come out on stage. Sign up for a spot in the show beginning at 6:30 p.m. You will

probably find a few diamonds in the rough among your Addison County neighbors when it comes to singing.

- If you like the thrill of motorsport competition there will be more of it for you this year as the G. Stone Demolition Derby, which is offering *three* nights of smashing action. Look for it at the Tractor pad on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

But not everything is new.

On Thursday at 11 a.m. head to the Show Tent, where girls and boys ages 4-10 will compete in the **Pedal Tractor Pull**. This is the youngsters' version of the real thing. Come on down and watch the fun and cheer for your favorite puller. Pulling tractor and sled is provided by Field Days.

Sign-ups start at 10.

Another old favorite comes along at 9:15 p.m. on Saturday evening when Field Days entertainment draws to a close with a classic — the **Farm Credit East Closing Fireworks Display**, which will be set off east of the horse area but viewable throughout the grounds.

## APPEARING REGULARLY

In addition to all of the special performances above, the fair offers a full slate of daytime entertainment, with some performers appearing each day, often several times. Here is a look at those:

- A popular performer returning this year is **Pirate Man Dan**, who will be offering his "Pirate Adventure Experience" twice a day at the Show Tent. Dan Jolley of Groton, an experienced clown, will offer a fun show for all ages — he says, "even teenagers." The friendly pirate's act includes balloons, magic,



**ANDREW SILVER OF THE SILVER CIRCUS**

unicycling, stilts and bubbles. One reviewer said Pirate Man Dan "put on a great show. Not only did all the kids in the room  
(Continued on, Page 30)



**FIELD DAYS OPENING PARADE**



# FIELD DAYS ENTERTAINMENT

enjoy him, but he had the adults all laughing at his jokes.”

• Look for **Buffalo Barfield’s “Unherd of Entertainment”** to tickle your funny bone in the show tent at various times each day. Gregg “Buffalo” Barfield and his wife, Michele, have created a unique and entertaining comedy and variety music show. The South Carolina-based act’s unique blend of music and comedy has been described as “Jeff Foxworthy meets Jimmy Buffett.”

The show is a blend of Americana, country, blues and oldies rock ‘n’ roll music with a touch of down home “clean” comedy. This one is good for the young kids.

• **Tom Joyce, the Magic Man**, will appear twice a day at the bandstand. Check the schedule to see when he is performing. He’s absolutely fabulous with the kids, but grown-ups will enjoy the show, too. He’s funny, but that doesn’t take anything away from his magic,

which is actually mysterious — it’s the best of both worlds

• Also in the audience participation category is the **Ladies’ Cast Iron Skillet Toss** at 1 p.m. on Wednesday (ladies throw skillets for distance and accuracy). Head to the tractor pad for this fun.

• Another contest of brute strength that is also a lot of fun to watch is the **arm-wrestling** competition at the Show Tent on Friday evening. The kiddos will start it off with youths 16 and

younger squaring off in real, head-to-head competitions at 5 p.m. (get on the sign-up sheet at 4 p.m.). After the learners have warmed up the audience, the big boys and girls take their turn facing off against competitors in their weight classes. Adult arm-wrestling starts at 7 p.m. (weigh-ins at 5 p.m.) with bouts in left- and right-hand. The tension is palpable; the excitement is real; the payoff is tremendous. You’ve got a see it — or take part in it!

## Antique equipment tell us stories from the past

By CAROLINE JIAO

For a lot of fairgoers, the Addison County Fair and Field Days is about eating street food, enjoying the rides and watching cars crash into each other.

For some, on the other hand, the fair is about treasure-hunting the old memories on a farm through the antique equipment displays, working with all kinds of animals and tools before electricity was a thing — it’s about living that way of life.

Sudbury’s Ted Russell, 65, could be found operating various horse-pulled apparatus across a demonstration field near the horse barns. He feels proud about his work.

Being a fifth-generation farmer, Russell had been mixing draft horses with tractors to operate his farm for 45 years.

“The forever reason is I love horses,” he said. “My first-grade picture, I was wearing a sweater my mother knit for me, that I picked the pattern, and I had horses on it.”

Love is an understatement. Six years ago, driving home from the county fair, Russell saved two of his draft horses from a truck fire by

almost sacrificing his life.

Now he is still actively doing farming demonstrations. He happily explained to a reporter about a peculiar hay tedder called “a chicken scratch tedder.” It’s a horse-powered cart with pitchforks attached at the back that can scrape up cut grass and rye like large, running chicken feet. He believes this specific one can be dated to the late 1800s.

He recalls the first gasoline shortage in the 1970s when prices for fuel skyrocketed. Regardless, Russell stayed positive.

“Here’s my excuse to use horses!” he jokingly recalled.

Russell also exhibited draft horses and taught many classes on halting and hitching horses. He has made teaching these skills to the new generation his life-long work through the Green Mountain Draft Horse Association, which hosts annual beginner courses at Shelburne Farms.

“Now, it has to do with keeping these methods, these skills, alive for the future, in case they’re needed,” he said.

Alan Clark, 76 of Bristol who helps run the nearby antique en-



ALAN CLARK, A long-time volunteer at the engine shed in the antique equipment area, shows his teddy bear Ferris wheel that attracts visitors’ attention. He wants to visualize in a livelier way how a generator and motor worked to power equipment before electricity was available on farms.

Independent file photo/Caroline Jiao

gines display, was not unfamiliar with farm life where horses used to be the main power source. When he was a boy on a farm in Addison, he remembered standing on top of a combine harvester, putting hay into bags.

Now, his hobby has become noisier farm companions — gasoline engines — many of which at the fair he owns. To put it in Clark’s own words — if it ain’t noisy, it ain’t the fair!

Clark has witnessed the Antique

Area at Field Days grow exponentially since he started volunteering 30 years ago. It expanded from one barn to having also a forestry building, an iron shop and an engine shed. There is talk about building a house of yesteryear to display all the household items so the audience could have a taste of real farm life a few hundred years ago.

“Once you start (volunteering), you can’t leave,” he said. “I was brought up on a farm. It’s just in your blood.”



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