Evergreen State Fair opens with great fun and food

The 2012 Evergreen State Fair, with more than 22,000 exhibits, opened Thursday and runs this year until Sept. 3.

The fair is an annual tradition for Snohomish County families with great exhibits, 4-H animal shows, a world-class carnival and fabulous food.

It also offers multiple discount options for families and individuals, including free admission each Friday until 1 p.m. with three canned goods. Collected non-perishables will be donated to the Sky Valley Food Bank. Last year, the Evergreen State Fairgrounds collected more than 50,000 pounds of food for the food bank.

“We are continually trying to find ways to make sure all families can access the Evergreen State Fair while also helping the community,” said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. “Our ‘Fair Cares’ program is one way we’re doing that.”

This year, grandstand performances include Gavin DeGraw and Colbie Caillat, Demi Lovato, Jake Owen and Rodney Atkins, as well as classic rockers Styx. Horse shows, car races and old-fashioned rodeos also are available for viewing.

For more information on the fair and its events, click here.
County honors Olson family for “Centennial Farm”

Snohomish County honored the Carl Olson family during Thursday’s [Evergreen State Fair](#) opening ceremony for more than 100 years of continued farm production.

Since Carl Olson purchased 40 acres at $7.50 an acre in 1893, the family has been an agricultural anchor in the Stanwood community.

“The Olson family’s legacy is long lasting and a true example of how family farming can continue to be successful in Snohomish County,” said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. “We want to make sure that farming remains economically viable for different generations.”

Carl Olson immediately went to work building a house, barn and shed—all of which still stand today—eventually marrying Ragna Dahl in 1905. Together, they sold milk from their Guernsey and Jersey dairy cows to Darigold, as well as raised chickens and sold eggs. They also operated a small prune orchard that produced (according to their neighbors) the best prunes around.
When World War II began, both sons, Oscar and Carl Jr., enlisted in the U.S. Navy. Oscar served as a Navy Seabee in the Pacific, and Carl served on an aircraft carrier. When the brothers returned home from the war, they readjusted to civilian life with Oscar working as a logger for Weyerhaeuser until the death of their parents, at which point, he returned to the farm and began raising Hereford beef cattle. Maintaining the farm became more challenging as the years progressed, so Carl Jr. and his wife, Nancy, agreed to join him.

Handed down through the generations, the farm has remained in operation. The original barn that Carl built in the 1890s has been renovated and now is used as the FFA school barn for market lamb projects, and a large vegetable garden is tended by students in the summer months.

“The Olson family understands the importance of sharing firsthand knowledge of farming with the youth who will be tomorrow’s farming,” Reardon said. “The FFA programs in this county have been very successful, and it’s because of families like the Olsons.”

Margaret, the youngest of Carl Jr. and Nancy’s three children, teaches agriculture and horticulture at Stanwood High School. In 1998, she was named Stanwood’s Woman of the Year. She oversees the sheep production, where market and meat lambs are a primary income source and will continue to be, even after Margaret retires.

Members of the family participated in Thursday’s opening ceremony, and a celebratory display focusing on the family’s farming heritage can be viewed in the Dairy Shrine at the fairgrounds during the fair, which runs until Sept. 3.

For more information on the county’s Centennial Farm program, click here.

**Classic rock performance ends summer “Music on the Plaza”**

Jetté and the Resonators will wrap up this year’s “Music on the Plaza” summer fun with their performance Wednesday.

For the past seven weeks, local bands have spiced up the Snohomish County Campus amphitheater, located at Rockefeller Avenue and Wall Street. Jetté and the Resonators will bring their classical rock to the campus for a season finale.

Other music styles have included local jazz, bluegrass, folk, even a Beatles cover band. Performances are held between 11:30 a.m.
and 1:30 p.m. each Wednesday through Aug. 29.

This Wednesday, bring a sack lunch or treat yourself to kettle corn, burgers and brats from the Comcast Arena Grill. Grab some fresh flowers from local Hmong growers while you explore other vendors and savor the end of summer.

For information on the program or to be considered for next summer’s series, contact Jessica Voelker, tourism coordinator, at (425) 388-3139.

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You may also contact me directly by phone at 425.388.3460.