

The Bonham Line

The Summer of 1966 was special for this farm boy. I had discovered The Big 89—WLS Radio, been invited to a couple of birthday parties that were for the most part unsupervised by adults, and was considered old enough to indulge in the fun at the county fairs and festivals.

We went to two fairs—The Martinsville Agriculture Fair and Expo and the Crawford County Fair at Oblong. In addition, Robinson and Casey held Fourth of July celebrations with carnival rides, and Robinson had an annual fall festival complete with rides on the square.

There were plenty of opportunities to satisfy our thirsts for fairs.

But 1966 was special. At the Oblong fair, I set my goal to win a stuffed animal at one of the game booths. And I did. But it took attending the fair and trying every day but two during the week-long event.

It was the booth with the baskets set up on the side and you had to toss a softball into the basket without the ball coming out. I came close several times, but on the last day of the fair, that softball finally went in and stayed in.

My prize was a stuffed dog.

It didn't bother me that I had probably spent as much money to win the thing as it would have cost to go to a store and buy the same stuffed animal. It was an achievement, plus I didn't give up. That was important to me.

Some say the games are rigged—that the balls are loaded with a weight or roughed up to be out of shape. I didn't notice anything different about the softballs used in this game. And I should have known, because I played enough softball in my day.

As I grew older, I enjoyed sitting in the Lions Club Bingo tent playing a couple of cards. I won at that game, too, and even earned the reputation as a good luck charm for those sitting near me. If I didn't win, usually someone within two or three chairs of me did.

A trip to the fair wasn't complete without stopping by The Cottage's food tent for a delicious barbecue sandwich and a nutty bar. Never had a nutty bar? Your life is incomplete! A nutty bar is made by taking a rectangular quart box of vanilla ice cream, cutting the full length on center vertically and horizontally and then cutting the length in half forming butter-size bars. Put a popsicle stick in one end, dip the ice cream in melted chocolate, and roll it in chopped peanuts. There, you have a nutty bar! A delicious treat on a hot summer fair-time day.

The excitement of going to the fair grew as we came closer to the fairgrounds and we could see the colorfully lit rides rolling or rotating in the sky.

I had several favorite rides, but my all-time favorite was the Trabant, also called "The Flying Saucer." It was similar to the round-up, but instead of standing, you sat in the Trabant. The ride started out going around and then it lifted at an angle, like the round-up. The sensation became that of going up and down waves. Then, the operator put the machine in reverse and you went up and down backwards.

Another favorite was the Rock-O-Plane. This one surprised even me. I don't usually like being upside down, but for some reason, this ride didn't bother me. Besides, I could control it to some extent by pulling back on the bar that locked the cage and prevented it from staying upright.

Other favorites were the Para-Trooper, Tilt-A-Whirl, and Scrambler. The only ride I didn't like was the Ferris Wheel. I got stopped at the top too many times with the seat rocking back and forth. Too bad the Ferris Wheel didn't have a cage around the seat like the Rock-O-Plane.

My number one rule about riding rides was "Don't eat anything until I am done with the rides!" It worked well.

Grandstand entertainment at Martinsville and Oblong included the auto thrill shows (or daredevils as we called them), tractor pulls, queen contests, professional wrestling (Dick the Bruiser at Oblong), harness racing and quarter midget racing at Martinsville, and, sometimes, live music.

The county fair provided a much needed break from working in the fields and caring for livestock on the farm. It gave us something to do on dates other than going to a movie at the theater or drive-ins.

I was not in 4-H, so I never entered a project in the competitions. But it was fun going through the exhibit halls to see the entries and their prize ribbons.

It's fair time in Arthur. Attend the fair. Sit and chat with friends, make new friends, watch the kids having fun, watch the adults having fun, take in the grandstand entertainment, watch the tractor pull and rodeo. Have a great time at the Moultrie-Douglas County Fair!

-rwb-

Arthur is still celebrating; enjoy the fair

By KENT A. STOCK
Staff Writer

Another Freedom Celebration is in the books, and, once again, it was a hot one! However, no rain was present to threaten the festivities, so that was good.

Was the crowd a little smaller this year because of the heat? Maybe yes and maybe no; it seemed to me to fluctuate throughout the day.

I think my favorite story about the day had to do with the replica of the Lincoln hearse being moved downtown for display.

The elaborate, beautiful carriage made the way from E-Z Trail on Route 133 to the tent at the gazebo parking lot.

As the hearse passed by, people actually pulled over to the side of the road, dis-

Town Talk

playing appropriate funeral etiquette. Respect and traditions aren't completely gone after all, which was very uplifting for those who witnessed the event.

The parade had somewhere around 175 entries, making it one of the largest ever held in our community. Lots of great entries, and a big crowd to watch along the route.

The fireworks, as always, were sensational. Well, I have a lot to share this week, so I'm going to stop now and write more next week.

Get out and enjoy the

Fair!

Post Season Honors From Decatur

Now that the News-Gazette is done with their All-Area teams, it is time for the Decatur paper to get in on the act. The Herald and Review has released their All-Area softball and baseball teams lists for the 2018 season.

In baseball, the Knights landed two players on the honorable mention squad: Marcus Vanausdoll and Lucas Otto.

In softball, Arthur Lovington Atwood Hammond had several players make

the team. Reagan Miller was chosen for second team All-Area honors. Taylor Powell was given a third team nod while teammates Shelby Frederick and Marissa Herschberger earned honorable mention.

Former teacher and coach Craig Moffett who led the Windsor/Stewardson-Strasburg Hatchets softball team to the state title was selected as the All-Area Softball Coach of the Year! Great job, and very well deserved award for a nice guy with a nice family.

Last year's Coach of the Year at the H&R was our own Jerry Lane of ALAH. We'll have to see who might win next year's award as both teams look to be quite strong for 2019!

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Letters to the Editor

God uses handicapped children in ways we don't understand

Dear Editor,

The world, and especially parents of handicapped children, often wonder, "Why are children born with handicaps?"

As the father of a child with Down Syndrome, I can vouch for the questions that go through your mind when you first learn your child is not as you had perhaps dreamed.

Jesus' disciples, in John 9, had an intriguing question after they "saw a blind man from birth." They questioned, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Jesus replied, "Neither this man nor

his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him." Jesus went on to later heal the man so he could see, which was a miracle the Pharisees refused to believe.

Today, God still uses what the world calls "handicapped" children in ways the world doesn't understand. Whether blind, crippled, autistic, or with any with other "handicap," God has a way of using these children to teach some of His most profound truths and life lessons.

Sadly, the world, blind to God's word of truth, often rejects these children. For instance, today abortion tragically claims the life of an estimated 67 to 90 percent of unborn children diagnosed in America with Down Syndrome. God only knows the joys, the wisdom, and the spiritual truths that are missed because many un-

born "handicapped" children never get to deliver what God had planned.

So the next time you meet someone the world calls "handicapped," take time to engage them. Learn from them. Respect them. Love them. Hire them. After all, in a world full of people seeking perfection but who are all born with the handicap of sin, these "special" people may be closer to what God has in mind than what the world of "normal" people will ever know.

Dave Allen,
Arthur

Congratulations to everyone who organized Freedom Celebration events

Dear Editor,

Just a note of congratulations to all the people involved in the fireworks on

Saturday night (June 30).

As I sat in my chair and watched all the families with children pass by, they were all so happy and having fun despite the heat.

So much work goes into this, so many hours of preparation, and we all just get to sit back and enjoy and see it all come together.

Starting with the parade in the afternoon and ending with the fireworks, we celebrate the freedom we have in our country. How lucky we all are to live in our own small town of Arthur.

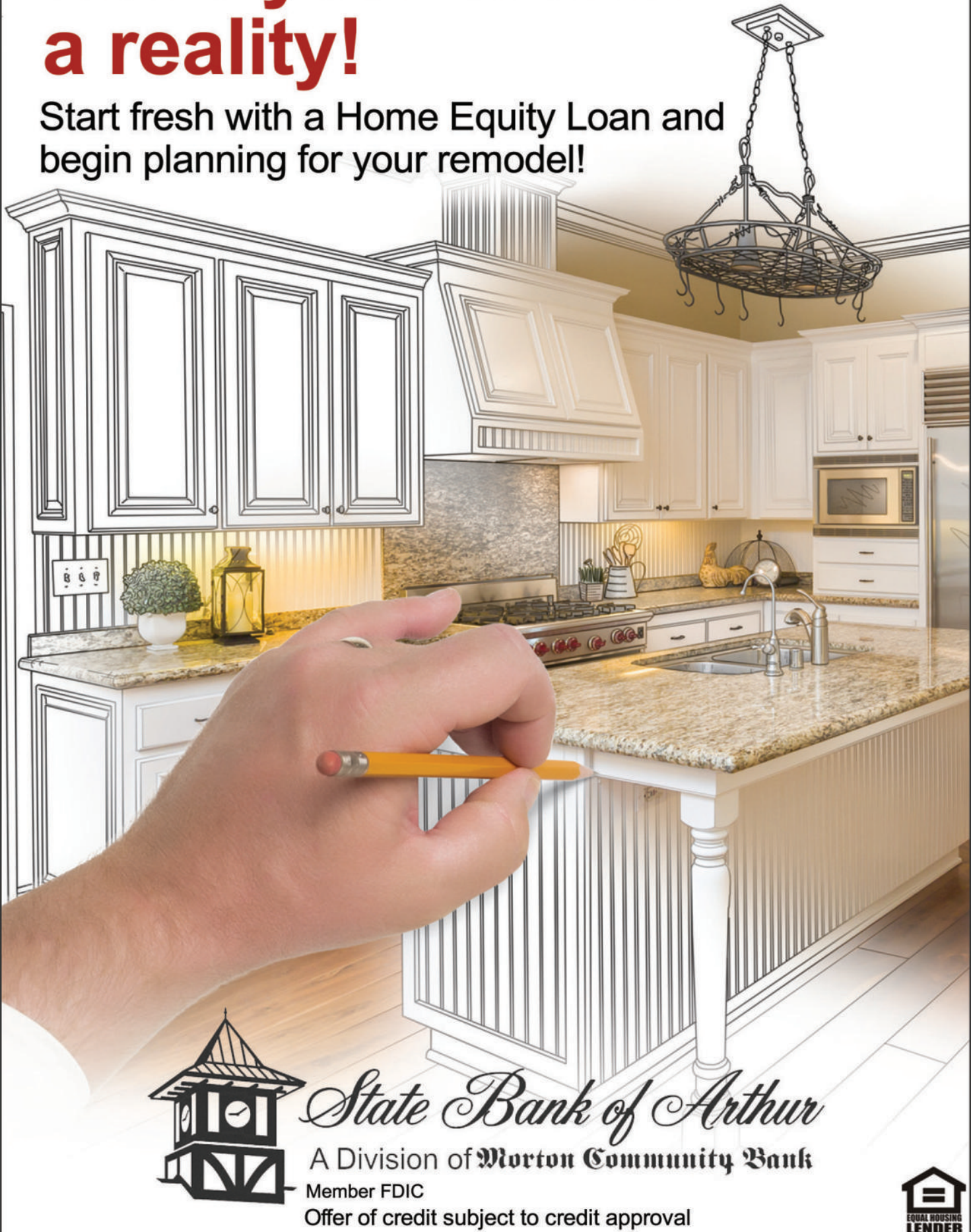
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Ann Huffman,
Arthur


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