

'Our Fair Is Real-- And Best In The Land'

7 Different Versions All Come Out To 'Fun'



Pat Boone sang it in the early movie Sunday night on television. But we beat him to it. We sang it all the way home from the fairgrounds to Livonia -- the lead tune from "State Fair" that boasts "Our State Fair Is The Best In The Land."

Pat's was an imaginary fair. Ours was real, so we feel we hold a slight edge. Besides, we sang it louder -- there are more of us. Seven to be exact. "We" are the McGees and we spent Sunday at the Michigan State Fair. And as you would expect, each of us had our own version of the fair.

TO 15 - YEAR - OLD Mike, about to enter the 10th grade at Bentley, it brought confidence in the form of two IBM handwriting analyses at one of the fair's many "technical" booths which he liked best. Wiggy lines on the IBM card show Mike is "sincere, courageous and quiet and attractive to the opposite sex."

"Not bad," he mused on the way home. "Cheaper than a psychiatrist and all I had to do was sign my name." (Actually

he signed it twice, he confessed. Once in his regular southpaw manner and the second time in an attempt to fool the machine. It didn't work.)

TO KEVIN, an outgoing 13-year-old who borders on the boisterous, it was the curly pitchmen who held the most attraction. His one fair memento was a comic bowler hat (he blew \$2 of his paperboy earnings on it) and in no time at all could rival anyone of the midway pitchmen, both in volume and content.

By the time we got home, we were all plenty weary of his rendition of "See Susie Wong -- half - woman, half snake. Talk to her -- she'll talk to you." His dad finally had to "talk" to talk to him.

NINE - YEAR - OLD Maureen enjoyed wandering through the buildings where the exhibits were displayed. She eyed the blue ribbon food-baking entries and immediately began making big plans for the Kwanzaa Easy-Bake oven she got for Christmas last year. (Do you have to live on a farm to enter, Mom?)

And then true to her species, she declared it could have been "tidier" around the animal barns.

FIVE - YEAR - OLD Tim figures "show and tell" time in kindergarten ought to be cinch. He's got enough material to last a year. But what he can't figure out, he says, is why the pigs feel so hard when you touch them and the cows so soft.

Should be the other way around, Tim calculates.

And "The Flight to Mars" ride "ain't nearly as scary as the one at Cedar Point."

TO FOUR - YEAR - OLD Patrick, there's only one way to judge a fair -- or any event, for that matter. That's by its hot dogs and the length of the ride on the merry-go-round.

Both got Pat's stamp of approval. So did the cotton candy (he preferred aqua to pink) and the popcorn. The sno-cones were the coolest, but the ice

cream on the stick "wasn't as good as the Jumbo Marge's."

Patrick (we call him "Fat Pat") worried some though while we watched farm hogs put a new brass ring through the nose of the McPetersen Farm's prize bull.

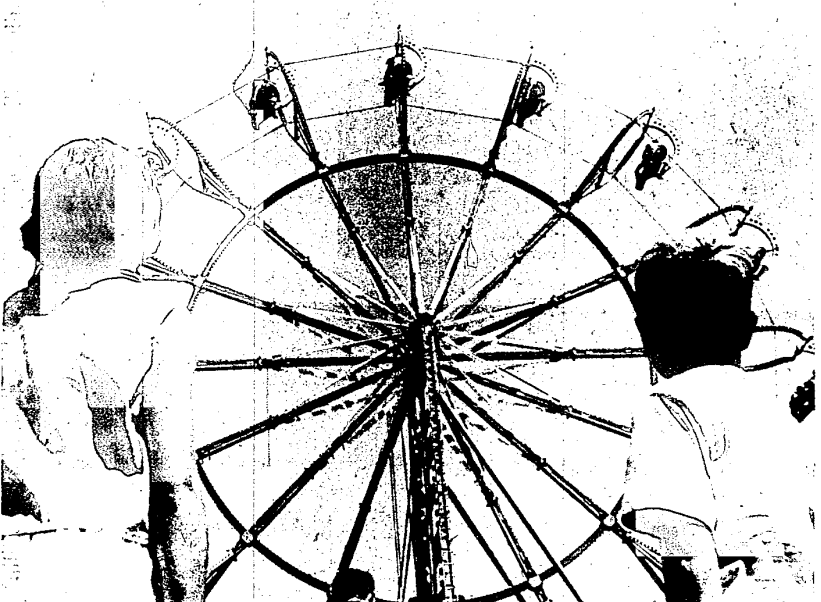
AL HIRT sounded great to husband, Bill, and myself while we rested on a bench in front of the band shell along with throngs of others who were obviously enjoying the Dixieland music as much as we were.

Our last fair was some 15 years ago -- but one thing was certain. People haven't really changed. The hair may be longer, the skirts shorter and the talk a lot freer.

But there's still something typically American and very magical about a State Fair. It brought to mind another song from "State Fair" -- the one that says "I liked what I saw and I saw what I liked. That's for me." Or I should say "us."

"Hey, Tim, did you really win some kind of prize?" asks skeptical four-year-old Pat McGee.

Story By Marie McGee Photos By Craig Gaffield



Boy, does that look like fun agree Maureen and Tim McGee



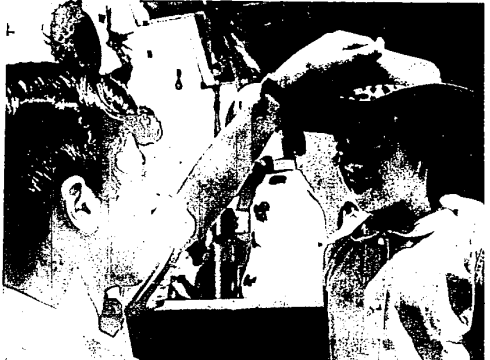
"I'll take a green one -- and you got any with Donald Duck?" asks five-year-old Tim McGee of the balloon lady at the Michigan State Fair.



"I think the lady put on too much mustard--but I'll eat it anyway," chomps Pat McGee, 4.



"Who needs a straw for this Sno-cone -- I like it better this way," says 13-year-old Kevin McGee.



"Now you're ready to make the rounds," 15-year-old Mike McGee tells his sister, Maureen, 9, as he helps her pick out a hat.