

Great pumpkins visit Circleville

By Dustin Egan
The Gazette Staff

Extra weigh-in joins rides, entertainment, parades for one of state's largest festivals

CIRCLEVILLE — Billed for years as The Greatest Tree Show on Earth, the 1960s Annual Circle-Circleville Show is set to fill the downtown streets once again with its traditional parade, rides and smells of festival food, plenty of live music, a countless number of parades and, of course, 1,000-pound-plus pumpkins.

The festivities begin Tuesday and continue through Oct. 28. The Circleville Pumpkin Show is the sixth-largest festival in the United States, with an annual attendance of more than 300,000. Anyone traveling on U.S. 23 during the event can expect to see traffic backed up along the east ramps and down the far right lanes of the highway trying to get into the downtown area.

Thursday begins with the pumpkin, watermelon and long guard weigh-in hosted by the Southern Ohio Giant Pumpkin Growers Association, followed by an evening preview of concessions, rides and performances by the Pumpkin Show Band and nationally known country rockers McMurtry Lane.

Thursday's SOGPG event, which previously took place annually at Love's in Chillicothe, is a separate event from the traditional giant pumpkin weigh-in, which begins at 9:15 a.m. Wednesday. Both events will be at Court and Main streets in Circleville. Specimens weighed at Wednesday evening are the festival's traditional display at the downtown location.

Thursday's SOGPG event begins at 9 a.m. and is a registered weigh-in for the Great Pumpkin Contest nationwide competition.

Tony Vanderpool, a Frankfurt resident and founding member of SOGPG, said he expects at least a half dozen large pumpkins for Thursday's weigh-in, some coming from Pennsylvania and West Virginia. He said 10 or more spectators from the Circleville area, each weighing at least 1,000 pounds, will compete for the first-place prize at the Wednesday event.

The three heaviest pumpkins from Thursday's SOGPG weigh-in will be displayed near the Pumpkin Show's prize-winning pumpkin from Wednesday's competition. SOGPG members will be present at the display throughout the week, selling seeds from giant pumpkins and providing literature to help first-time growers get started growing their own specimens for next year's weigh-in.

"With the drought we had this season, we're lucky to have what this year's pumpkin crop. The quantity of small pumpkins is down, but we still have a lot of big ones for the weigh-ins."

The intense pumpkin grower helped his plants defy the summer's extreme heat and lack of rain by watering his plants every day in order to raise two pumpkins he anticipates to weigh about 1,100 pounds each.

Dr. Robert Leggett, of Circleville, earned the first place prize at the 2011 Pumpkin Show with a pumpkin weighing 1,436 pounds. His 1,436-pound monstrosity was the 2009 weigh-off and is the heaviest entry in the festival's history. The world-record heaviest pumpkin topped the scales at 2,009 pounds and was grown this year by Ron Wallace in Greene, R.I.



Officials prepare a pumpkin to be lifted from a pickup truck to be weighed during the Giant Pumpkin Weigh-in at the 2008 Circleville Pumpkin Show. (COURTESY: TONY VANDERPOOL)

CIRCLEVILLE PUMPKIN SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

For a full schedule and history of the festival, visit pumpkinshow.com. More information about the Southern Ohio Giant Pumpkin Growers is available at sogpg.com.

WEDNESDAY
• The festival's opening ceremony begins at 9 a.m. Wednesday at Court and Main streets.
• Gus the Squash Carver will perform a giant pumpkin carving demonstration at noon at the Circleville-Pickaway Visitors Pavilion, where the Circleville Pumpkin Show Band will perform from 6 to 7 p.m.
• The Little Miss Pumpkin Show Parade will march through the festival beginning at 3:30 p.m., and the Miss Pumpkin Show Parade kicks off at 8 p.m.

THURSDAY
• Dr. Leggett will share his art of growing giant pumpkins during a presentation from 11 to 11:45 a.m. at the Circleville-Pickaway Visitors Pavilion. The Fat Burnin' Choppers will perform from 2 to 2:45 p.m. at the same location, followed by a 5 p.m. performance from the Circleville High School jazz band, and students from the Graham School of Irish Dancing will take the stage from 6 to 6:45 p.m.
• The Main Street Stage will host a performance from the YMCA Dance Academy at 12:30 p.m., live music from the Sterling Bluegrass Boys at 2 p.m., and classic rock from Mother Hubbard from 7 to 10:30 p.m.
• Kory Adams will perform his style of pop music from 1 to 1:30 p.m. at the Pickaway-Forestin Street Stage, where the Logan Elm High School band will perform at 6:15 p.m., followed by the Westfall High School band at 7 p.m.

• Thursday's street parades include the Baby Parade from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and the Parade of Bands from 8 to 9 p.m.

FRIDAY
• Several activities are scheduled throughout the day at the Circleville-Pickaway Visitors Pavilion, including a ride from the Columbus Zoo from noon to 12:45 p.m., a symphonic string demonstration at 1 p.m., a performance from the Teen Ringers Choppers at 5 p.m., and the Pumpkin Show Band will entertain at 6 p.m.
• Performances on the Main Street Stage include live music from the Harvest Kings at 2 p.m., easy listening and country music from Mathurin at 4:30 p.m., country music from Jimmie Jordan at 6:30 p.m., and classic rock from Chillicothe's own Joker Wild at 8 p.m.
• The Fat Parade will entertain onlookers from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., and the Parade of Fraternal & Civic Organizations is from 8 to 9 p.m.

SATURDAY
• The festival's final day begins with the Circleville Pumpkin Show Classic 5-Mile Run beginning at 9 a.m. at Circleville High School.
• The Circleville-Pickaway Visitors Pavilion will host performances from the Roundtown Ringers Chime Choir at 11 a.m., the Graham School of Irish Dancing at noon, a tribute to the late musician Ted Lewis by the Van Wazer's Famous Jazz Quartet at 1 p.m., the Pickaway Brass at 3 p.m., and the Ashland Community Band performs at 7 p.m.

• Children 15 and younger can take part in a pumpkin pie eating contest held from noon to 12:45 p.m. at the Main Street Stage, where youth and adults 16 and older can demonstrate their best boy-calling during a contest from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. The Cooper Harmony Boys, a southern gospel quartet will take the stage from 7 to 8 p.m.

• The Queen's Parade will travel the streets of Circleville at 8 p.m. to wrap up the festival.

50+ 3-Digit Bowling TV Coverage
• post tournament Oct. 27, live music from Teaser. www.ansandazz.com

• **First Capital Music Hall**, 47 W. Second St., books open mic night, live music from Good 'N' Steady, Saturday, a night of comedy and music featuring Tim Spoons, The Mustangs, and Lou Green & Friends, concert open at 7 p.m., Monday, Gus Wild Guitars with Funna.

• **Last Stop**, 2057 N. Bridge St., today through Saturday, disc jockey and karaoke from Burnin' Star Wednesday, ladies night and open jam.

• **Paint Golf**, 339 S. Point St., Saturday, Ohio State Buckeyes collegiate party.

• **Ruby's Timout Sports Bar**, 66 E. Main St., today, karaoke, Friday comedy night featuring 2008 Book, 9 to 11 p.m., cover is \$5 at the door, advance tickets are available. Saturday, karaoke will follow the Ohio State Buckeyes game. Tuesday, Karaoke, Wednesday, live music from Ashley for more information, call 740-851-4027.

• **Over Tavern**, 289 E. Main St., today, pool tournament, sign-up is at 6:30 p.m., tournament starts at 7 p.m., entry fee \$5.

• **Patrick's Pub**, 20 N. Plaza Blvd., Thursday, opens mic with Pen Stevens, 8 p.m., Friday, live music from Frankie Thacker, Monday, karaoke, 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., Tuesday, acoustic night with Brian Day, 8:30 to 11:30 p.m., Wednesday, trivia, 8 p.m.

• **Thirty Fox**, 31 E. Main St., Saturday, live music from Jeremy Flemming, 9 p.m. to midnight.

• **Shannon Lane**, 1488 N. Bridge St., Tuesday night through Thursday, bowling, \$2 per game, 8 p.m. to open, Friday, bowl two games, get four, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday night, Thunder Alley, open lanes by the hour from 9:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., Lounges and forming show, for more information, call 740-773-3300, www.shannonlane.com

• **Budweiser Lounge**, 865 Eastern Ave., Thursday, ladies night with D.J. Amber, Friday, D.J. John Maxwell, Saturday, live music from Sonny Creek, 9:30 p.m.

• **Wagner's Bar and Grill**, 1514 Mountain Valley Road, Thursday, acoustic Thursday, Wednesday, start league.

• **Dock at White**, 60 E. Water St., Friday, D.J. Ronnie, Tuesday, Loose Pocket.

• **Harriet Tavern**, 334 S. Bridge St., today, open stage, 8 to 11 p.m., sign-up at 7 p.m.

• **Jerry's Place**, 119 S. Main St., 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

• **Jerry's West**, 21 Star Drive, Wednesday, Showin' Dog Karaoke, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

• **The Hardtail Cafe and Saloon**, 833 Eastern Ave., Friday, Video Pinball/Hollywood Saturday, live music from Good 'N' Steady, Sunday, pool tournament, 6 p.m., Wednesday, ladies day, Open at 11 a.m., Monday through Saturday and Sunday.

• **Crowley's Tavern**, 15 E. Main St., today, live music from the Goodstein Astorians, 8 to 10:30 p.m., Friday, live music from Ben Cyprian and Bill Barnes, 6 to 8 p.m., and live music from Joe Riffin Karaoke from 8 p.m. to midnight, Saturday, D.J. Jimmy Oylek, 9:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

BAR/BRIDGE

• **Valley Bar**, 121 E. Main St., today, open jukebox, 9 p.m. to midnight, Sunday and Wednesday, pool tournament, 7:30 p.m., \$5 entry fee.

CIRCLEVILLE

• **Tootsie's Pumpkin Inn**, 117 E. Main St., Thursday, live music from Mike Boyle, Saturday and Monday, free jukebox.

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