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FOR ALL THE MARBLES  
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# ROUNDUP

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GUNNISON COUNTRY TIMES • 970.641.1414

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# FUN AND FOR KIDS AND ALL

Savannah Nelson  
 Special to the Times

## Cattlemen's carnival draws masses in annual fashion

It comes but once a year. For many Gunnison-area residents not keen on 4-H or rodeos — and some who are — the highlight of Cattlemen's Days is the arrival of the carnival. Games, rides and fair food are available for one and all. Below is a depiction from this past Friday of some of the sights, sounds and people who make the carnival what it is.

### 4:55 P.M.

The Ferris wheel lights are ignited by a small switch in the conductor's booth at the 2014 Cattlemen's Days carnival. The giant wheel starts spinning and illuminating the twilight, signaling for the lights of the other rides to turn on. In a matter of minutes, the lot between South 14th and Spruce is transformed into an array of flashing lights and blaring music, as ride operators power up their machines for the night.

### 5 P.M.

The crowd, having waited in anticipation, is able to step within the carnival gate, free to explore or purchase tickets. Wrist bands, running 30 bucks a pop, allow patrons unlimited access to their favorite rides. Many locals, including Elizabeth Stepanek, opt to skip on the bands and only pay for tickets as they go. "This way," the 16-year-old comments, "I can enjoy the few rides I want to go on without feeling the pressure to go on all of them without wasting my money."



### 5:15 P.M.

When customers are near, booth operator Mark Mooney is watching and calling out. "Are you ready to win a prize? I can tell just by looking at you how strong that throwing arm is! Take a shot at my pins and see what happens!" People of all ages — children and adults, alike — are drawn to the blue-curtained stand where pins are propped and baseballs are available to be thrown. Five shots are allowed per round. Ball after ball is thrown and each pin remains standing. Mooney grins and says, "Just throw harder" when asked what his secret is.

### 5:45 P.M.

Luckily for Gunnison couple Anna and Steven Walker, there are carnival activities that are perfect for them and their child, 8-month-old Phillip. The carnival is a friendly place for children and their parents, with rides designed for slower movements and less spin. There's a "mini" roller coaster, where kids can sit in the lap of a dragon and go around the track either by themselves or with a parent holding their hand. The classic carousel is a popular choice for families with young ones. The Walkers decide their favorite thing to do is walk around while snacking on cotton candy, waving in awe at all the bright lights and laughing people.

### 6:25 P.M.

Children come out of the "Fun House" structure, looking both excited and anxious. Jake Krider, a 7-year-old from Creede, hugs his grandmother, Rosie, and exclaims, "It was scary in there! I felt like I was being chased. But it was so much fun!" Jake decides to get back into the same line and try his luck with mirrors and haunting shadows again.

Carnival ▶▶ B2



Pictured here are scenes from this year's Cattlemen's Days carnival. Photos by Matt Burt

## GUNNISON ARTS CENTER

102 S Main St. Gunnison • 970.641.4029  
 www.gunnisonartscenter.org

**June Gallery Exhibit**  
 "High Point - The Art of Showing Horses"  
 Cheri Isgreen and Barbara Haynie

### Artist Opportunities/Call for Entries

**August Community Open Show**  
 All Mediums, Theme: Bike Art  
 Submissions: July 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, ArtWalk August 1<sup>st</sup>

### Community Events

**Gunny Grass Block Party** ~ Friday, July 18th, Gates open at 4:30 pm  
 Gunny Grass Bluegrass Festival kicks off in front of the GAC. Don't miss the outdoor stage and bar! Tyler Hansen - 5:30 pm, Mahogany Splinters - 6 pm, Stray Grass - 7:05 pm, Horseshoes & Hand Grenades, 8:10 pm

**Sundays @ 6** ~ Sunday, July 20th, 6 pm at Legion Park  
 The Funky Bob Show, the one-man show that sounds like a ten piece funk band!

**Monthly Film Series: "A Birder's Guide to Everything"** ~ Saturday, July 19th, 7 pm GAC  
 Directed by Rob Meyer. PG-13, running time 86 minutes. Tickets, \$10

### Classes & Workshops

**Dance & Clay Classes Start This Week** - Sign up now for all ages

**Splatter Painting and Spritzers** - (Adult) - July 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-9:00 pm - \$35

**African Dance Workshop** - (Ages 8-Adult) - Wednesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6:30-8 pm - \$15

**Intro to Hoop Dance Workshop** - (Ages 8-Adult) Saturday July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1-2:30 pm - \$15

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**Gunnison**  
 1000 North Main Street, Suite #3  
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Special savings on closeouts throughout the store!

## Carnival

► from page B1

### 6:50 P.M.

An evening shower doesn't stop the carnival from running. Rain or shine, the rides continue. The crowd thins and umbrellas appear. Others, however, stick around and don't seem to mind the rain. Molly Pike, 20, not only stays out and about but manages to pose in front of all her favorite rides with her friends and family. "I'm going to the rodeo next, even if it gets wet," Pike exclaims. Fortunately, the rain stops within 10 minutes, clearing the sky for a beautiful Colorado sunset.

### 7:10 P.M.

The busiest ride is perhaps the most ominous from afar. The "Gravitron," a giant metal cage, rests with a line of 25 people waiting to be strapped inside and twisted in every direction. The operator, a man named Duke, grins at every person in line before asking if they're "100 percent ready." Comments from the excited crowd create a buzz: "I hope I don't puke again!" "Dad, it isn't that scary." "I know I just ate, but this seems like the opportune time to scream my head off."

### 7:55 P.M.

There's a snow cone spill next to the ticket booth. Armed with a broom and a trashcan, carnival worker Carrie Nelson bends down to clean up the mess. She notes that although she has no problem cleaning up messes and doing her job, she feels bad that a person somewhere probably dropped their treat of the night. "It doesn't get much more refreshing than a summer night and a snow cone in Gunnison, Colorado," Nelson admits.

### 8:30 P.M.

"Be safe!" warns mother Kris Travis to her daughter, Kylie, 12, as she drops her off to enjoy the carnival. Kylie and her friend, Violet Fry, are excited to enjoy the carnival and see all of their friends mid-summer. "It's great to see just about everyone here, since I haven't seen a lot of people since school ended," Fry offers. The girls head toward the swing ride, ready to catch up with the other local kids out to enjoy the carnival lights.

### 9 P.M.

Crowds shuffle into the lot to enjoy the rides after watching a couple hours of rodeo action. After seeing action-packed Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association events — from steer wrestling to bull riding — the audience is ready to jump into some

action of their own. In accordance, "yee-haws" are exclaimed as children and adults emerge from their favorite spinning strawberry ride holding tightly onto cowboy hats.

### 9:55 P.M.

Food stands are readily available for carnival goers, who seem that they can stomach both the food and the jolting rides. Brandon Miller, a former rodeo participant, buys his wife Chelsey a chocolate and powdered sugar funnel cake. Miller has a pickle dog — a hotdog inside of a pickle, which is then fried like a corn dog — for himself. Both are delicious, according to the couple — a late-night treat for the annual excitement.

### 10:30 P.M.

Shots are fired from a popular stand littered with stuffed animals of all shapes, sizes and varieties. Faux shotguns are set up across a bar, which customers are encouraged to lean against and take their best shot at every target. Katie Choi hands a parent a stuffed elephant after she shoots the bulls-eyed target three times in a row at her booth. As the man hands the elephant to his open-mouthed daughter, Choi smiles and says, "Now that's what this is all about."

### 10:45 P.M.

Many of the local families with small children have cleared the carnival, which welcomes a new wave of customers. For two local teenagers enjoying a date, Hunter Lucas and Dylan Miller, the thinner lines enable them to have a romantic Ferris wheel ride. It's perfect for hand-holding privacy and a view of the valley at the very top.

### 11:35 P.M.

Among the crowds of people are local police officers, roaming the fair. Their job, according to officer Chris Wilson, is to make sure the carnival is a safe place for everyone.

### 12 A.M.

The end of the carnival is announced over the speakers, as the rides slow to a stop and the masses of crowds shuffle out of the lot and walk toward their cars. For the few children that are left, some can be heard crying. They don't want to leave. Carnival ride operators smile and stretch as their shifts come to a close. The patrons of the carnival, although sad to see the Ferris wheel lights flicker off, look forward to next year's festivities.

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