

50th Annual

# DeWitt Ox Roast

Official program



1995 DeWitt Ox Roast Queen's Court - Crowned at the Miss DeWitt Pageant, July 29 were, from left: DeWitt Little Princess Maryelise White, DeWitt Junior Miss Kasey Schaub and Miss DeWitt Jennifer Jury. Photo by Jennifer Vincent.

1945-1995

The 50th Annual DeWitt Ox Roast official program.  
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DeWitt-Bath Review and Clinton County News, Aug. 19-21, 1995.

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# Welcome to the 50th Annual DeWitt Ox Roast

Welcome to DeWitt and the 50th Annual DeWitt Ox Roast. We hope your time spent here is enjoyable and relaxing in our ever-growing city.

The DeWitt Ox Roast is the biggest attraction to the downtown area every year. We have rides, arts and crafts, a food tent and the parade, just to name a few of the many events going on throughout the festival.

On Friday night, there is food made and served by some of our non-profit organizations. New to this year's Ox

Roast is a 3 on 3 basketball tournament. We are excited to bring something for the enjoyment and involvement of the young people.

A complete calendar of events with dates, times and locations appears on page 12 along with a map of DeWitt on page 13. An index appears on this page, along with parking and other information.

I would like to thank all the board members, chairpersons and volunteers who help make the Ox Roast possible. Also, a big thank you to the businesses, D.P.W., city council, police and the fire department for their support and help every year. Last, but certainly not least, a great big thank you to the public for your attendance and involvement with the Ox Roast and the Memorial Building. This is your town and what makes this community such a great place to live. So, join all your neighbors, bring all your friends and help celebrate our 50th year.

**Rodger Brown, president  
DeWitt Memorial Board**



Rodger Brown

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## Things you need to know about the Ox Roast

The following are a few basics about the DeWitt Ox Roast - answers to some of the most asked questions and some tips about getting around DeWitt. Hopefully, this will assist you in enjoying a safe, fun filled festival day.

### Parking information

Parking is available on the outskirts of town on city streets. Golf carts are available throughout the downtown area for people who need help getting around.

### Rest areas

Restrooms are available in several locations: downtown, at city park near the river, and on side streets.

### First aid/police

A first-aid station and police assistance booth is located between Sam's Diner and Terranova's Party Store on Bridge Street.

### Camping sites

Sleepy Hollow State Park, located at 7835 E. Price Road, Laingsburg, welcomes visitors with 181 modern campground sites, each equipped with electrical outlets, picnic tables and a fire circle. Two shower facilities are available.

The park is open 8 a.m.-10 p.m. each day, with the campground open 24 hours. There is a \$10 per night camping fee, and all motor vehicles must have a \$4 sticker pass (available at the park). For more information, call (517) 651-6217.

### Restrictions

No motor vehicles (cars, motorbikes, recreational vehicles, etc) will be allowed on the streets of the immediate downtown. Surrounding streets are open and usable for parking. Also, no alcohol is allowed on city streets during the Ox Roast.

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# Ox Roast continues to evolve after 50 years

*First Ox Roast's goal was to raise funds for a community building*

By KEN COIN

For a child growing up in DeWitt in years past, the annual Ox Roast (the correct DeWitt pronunciation is "Oxt Rhose") was anticipated as the pinnacle event of the year, rating right up there with Christmas and the last day of school.

Allowances were saved, pop bottles cashed-in and chores were done for that extra spending money needed to last us through the day. Weeks ahead of time, preparations were made to festoon bicycles with crepe paper and intricate plans were hammered out as to who we would meet where and when and what ride to go on first. It was exhausting work for us kids, but little did we realize at the time all the exhausted adults that had been planning the event for months.

DeWitt's first Ox Roast in 1945 was a simple affair compared to what we've come to expect. But it was put on by the community for the community with one objective: to raise funds for a community building on Washington Street which would serve as a memorial to the recent veterans of World War II. A simple plan, with simple means, with a simple goal.

The Ox Roast of 1945 was held up on the main four corners as a one day affair. There were no commercial concessions that year and all the food and prizes were donated. The rides and games were made locally by volunteers and even the ox was donated by the Rosevale Packing Company.

"A lot of work!" recalls Bertha Lenneman, one of the organizers of that first event. "But everyone pulled together and worked so hard...and every dime went in toward the building." Bertha admitted that no one really knew how to plan the event, they just put it together the best they could and learned from their mistakes.

With experience under their belts and new ideas the organizers later tried holding the event at the school grounds on Washington Street but it was decided to return it to the four corners where it would basically remain up to the present. They also tried having a two-day affair but it was deemed too much work and, as many of the local support groups were based in the area churches, there was opposition to using Sunday.

One feature of the first Ox Roast which has continued to the present is the raffle. The first year it consisted mainly of items donated by local merchants. Within a few years however, the pot was sweetened with the grand prize being an automobile; a tradition which lasted several decades. By the 1950's the commercial rides had become an annual thing but many of the games remained locally made by various organizations. It was a format which continued into the 1970's.

As much fun as the Ox Roast was, the anticipation is what many people recall the most. It's hard to describe the excitement that arose in the community in preparation for the event; I can't think of a modern equivalent. It seems DeWitt (or perhaps communities in general) so seldom get excited in unison anymore. Weeks before the big day, service club members went



The DeWitt Ox Roast has evolved over the years, and nothing lends more evidence to that than the name of the annual event. While roast ox was in fact a part of the event in the early years, beef is the actual blend in Ox Burgers, which sell for \$2 at the food tent. File photo.

door-to-door selling raffle tickets. Women's groups went door-to-door also, recruiting volunteer bakers for pies and brownies. Organizers often called every number in the phone book canvassing households for volunteers, filling endless sheets of work schedules.

For the children, the closing of the streets on Friday afternoon began the countdown. And throughout the night, with the sound of the carnival workers hammering everything together, kids spent a restless night with visions of the Tilt-A-Whirl and Miss Frolic spinning in their heads.

Although the dynamics have changed somewhat, the DeWitt Ox Roast remains basically the same: an event of simple pleasures put on by the community, for the community to be enjoyed by everyone. May it continue to arouse community unity for another 50 years.

*Ken Coin is a resident of DeWitt and the area's leading historian.*

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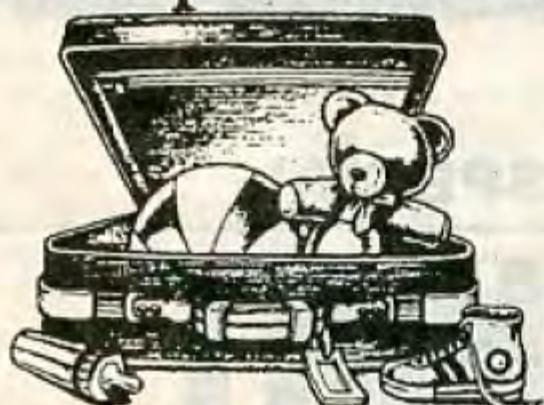
Printing



1995 Miss DeWitt Ox Roast Pageant contestants - Participating in the third annual competition were (front row, l. to r.) Allison Shaw, 11, Amanda Ostrom, 6, and Maryelise White, 9, (back

row) Stacey McCorkle, 12, Kasey Schaub, 14, Jennifer Jury, 14, Rachelle Keresztes, 11, and Nicole Sierra, 14. Photo courtesy of Paul Love of Love Photography, DeWitt.

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## The DeWitt Business Association welcomes everyone to the 50th Anniversary of the DeWitt Ox Roast

DeWitt Business Association programs:

- The Welcome Sign - on US 27 advertises a member of the DeWitt Business Association for one month.
- The Shopping Guide Advertising - provides a complete listing of all current DBA members plus offering 1/4 page advertisements on a rotating basis to DBA members.
- The DBA Directory - provides information that will acquaint you with local resources.
- The Christmas Program - provides promotion for the Christmas Tree Lighting and Santa Claus Mailbox.
- The Easter Egg Hunt - is usually held the Saturday before Easter.
- Special Events - are organized throughout the year to promote the DBA and its members especially during the Ox Roast that is held in August.

Contact the DeWitt City Hall at (517) 669-2441  
to join or to obtain additional information



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# Annual parade kicks off at 10 a.m. downtown

With flashing lights and sirens blaring, DeWitt Police Chief Wendell Myers will escort a line of more than 60 entries in the 50th Annual DeWitt Ox Roast Parade, Aug. 19.

The parade starts at 10 a.m. on west Main Street and will travel through the downtown area, turning on Bridge Street and then west on Washington Street past the DeWitt Memorial Building. A viewing stand is located on the corner of Washington and Bridge Street.

The rain put a damper on last year's hour-long event. "We're hoping for better weather this year," says Parade Chairman Rev. Michael Arnold. "If it's good weather, it will probably last a little longer than an hour."

In celebration of the Ox Roast's 50th year, the theme of the event is "Working 50 Years Together 1946-1995". It will feature many of DeWitt's past mayors and presidents of the Memorial Association.

New this year are a group from St. Johns with miniature horses and a monster truck from the DeWitt area. "We're also having a bag pipe band," Arnold says.

In addition, there will be several marching units, floats and antique vehicles. Local officials, including Mayor Mike Towns will join the parade with Citizen of the Year Dick Smeage and pageant winners.

Senator Mike Rogers and Representative Allen Cropsey will also be on hand, as well as many civic groups, churches, clubs and school bands.

Parade entries, being announced by Tim Barron of Q106



Floats, tractors, cars, horses and more make the DeWitt Ox Roast Parade a must-see event. File photo.

radio station, will be judged in four different categories, offering a \$25 prize for best of show in each: Best Marching Unit (style, presentation, size), Best Non-Commercial Float (theme presentation), Best Animal Unit and Best Antique Show Vehicle (25 years of older).

Handling the judging duties are Patty Weihe of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, who is the past director of the W.T.A. National Champion Vetterettes drum and drill team; Rev. Milan Maybee of Jackson, who is an antique car and truck enthusiast and auctioneer; and Jody Knol of East Lansing's WKAR FM-90's Morning Classical show.

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There's never a shortage of knick knacks and other crafting items on downtown streets during the Ox Roast. File photo.

## Ox Roast expecting over 100 arts and crafts vendors

The Arts and Crafts Show is one of the main attractions of the DeWitt Ox Roast. Over 100 vendors are expected to display goods in the downtown area.

Everyone who attends will find something irresistible among the variety of items. The booths this year are being placed north and south of the stoplight on Bridge Street. The new look of the downtown area is sure to be pleasing to everyone.

Friday night, the booths are open from 5-9 p.m. Local non-profit organizations are hosting food concessions on East Main Street to satisfy the hungry shopper. Saturday, the crafts are open from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. (one hour before the parade at 10 a.m.) Face painting, Bible stories and a play area for the young children to stay in while the adults shop are located in front of the Masonic Temple on N. Bridge.

Live entertainment on the stage one block south of the stoplight is sure to liven the atmosphere and give an enjoyable break.

The vendors come from all over Michigan and Indiana to display and sell their own unique and personalized arts and crafts. We hope this year's show is pleasing to everyone who attends. Don't miss this 50th year of the DeWitt Ox Roast.

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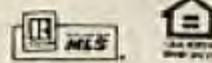


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# Ox Roast activities, times and locations

## Thursday

Rides and carnival - 3-11 p.m. at Riverside Park  
 Pot of Gold raffle ticket sales - all day at Riverside Park

## Friday

Arts and crafts - 5-9 p.m.  
 Pot of Gold raffle ticket sales - all day at Riverside Park  
 Rides and carnival - 3-11 p.m. at Riverside Park  
 Red Comet/Charlene's Heartbeat, Gold Stars - 5:15-6:45 p.m. on stage downtown  
 Roiter Family Cloggers - 6-6:30 p.m.  
 Ice Cream Eating Contest - 7-8 p.m.  
 The Clintonaires (Barbershop group) - 8:15-8:45 p.m.

## Saturday

Three on Three basketball tournament - all day  
 Food tent - 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on W. Main Street

Arts and crafts - 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. downtown  
 Parade - 10 a.m. downtown  
 Creative Capers - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. downtown  
 Face painting and Bible stories - 11 a.m. downtown  
 Rides and carnival - 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. at Riverside Park  
 Bingo - noon on E. Jefferson Street  
 Frog Leap registration - noon at West Riverside Park  
 Frog Leap contest - 1 p.m. at West Riverside Park  
 Auction - 1 p.m. on stage downtown  
 Pot of Gold raffle tickets - ticket booth  
 Kids tractor pull - 4 p.m. on West Main Street  
 DeWitt Taekwando - 2:45-3:15 p.m.  
 Singer Jim Firos - 3:30-4 p.m.  
 Lansing Country Coyotes Dance Club - 4:14-4:45 p.m.  
 The Coyotes - teaching line dancing - 5-6:30 p.m.  
 Red Comet/Charlene's Heartbeat, Gold Stars - 5:45-6:15 p.m. on stage downtown  
 High Ground Gospel Group - 6:30-7 p.m.  
 Street dance - 8 p.m. - midnight on stage downtown by band "Sawmill Road".

# Several events offered for kids this year

The 50th Annual Ox Roast has several offerings for kids with lots of chances to win prizes.

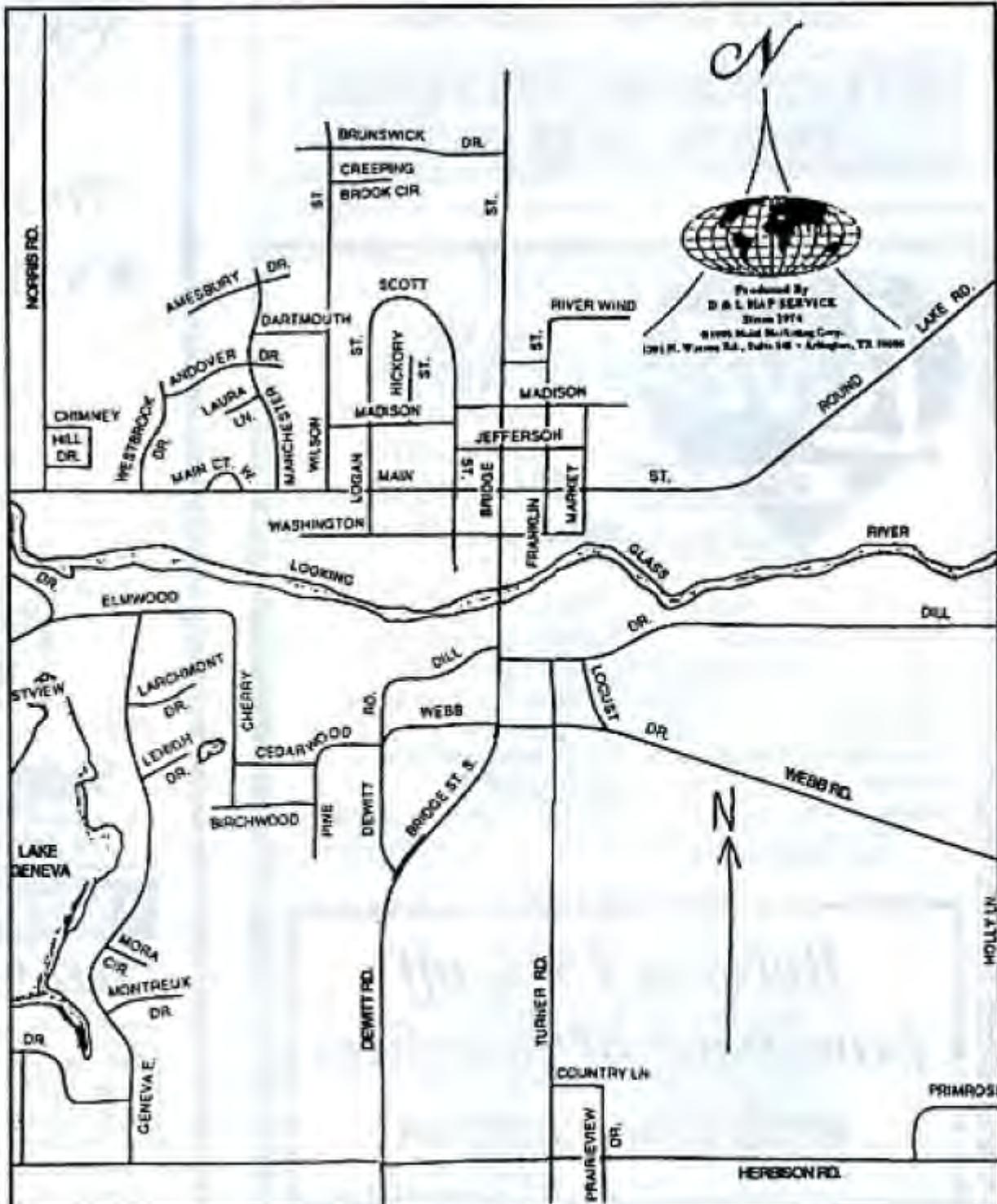
**The Kid's Ice Cream Eating Contest** is Friday at 7 p.m. on the stage downtown and participation is free. The contest is sponsored by the DeWitt Business Association.

**The Ox Roast Parade** begins at 10 a.m. Saturday. This will be the largest parade yet and features fire engines, clowns, marching bands, floats, old cars and much, much more.

**The Auction** begins at noon with viewing beginning at 11 a.m. at the stage downtown. Auction items include a car from Pat McCrackin Ford, a car from Annie Rae, Makita Cordless drill from MPC Cashway Lumber and donations from many other businesses and individuals.

**The Frog Leaping Contest** is Saturday at 1 p.m. at Riverside West Park. Registration begins at noon and the entry fee is \$1 per frog. The contest is sponsored by L and L Shop-Rite in DeWitt.

**"Puff the Dragon" Tractor Pull** is for children ages 4-11 at 4 p.m. on West Main Street. Tractors and weights are supplied. Registration cost is \$1 per child.



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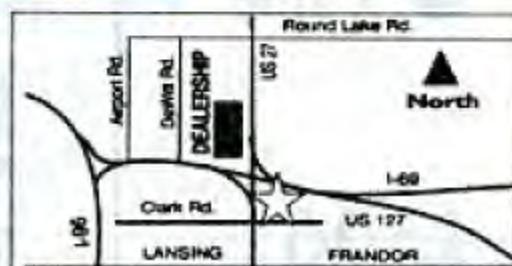
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# “Sawmill Road” highlights entertainment stage

Each year the entertainment for the Ox Roast has grown.

Beginning in 1992, the entertainment stage was introduced with entertainment all day on Saturday. The response was so overwhelming that the DeWitt Memorial Association decided the following year (1993) to also have the stage open on Friday evening while the arts and crafts booths were open.

A street dance made its debut in 1993 beginning at 8 p.m. on Saturday night and an auction has been held for the past two years on Saturday following the parade.

The schedule for free entertainment near the corners of Main and Bridge streets is:

## Friday

5:15-5:45 p.m. - Red Comet Performers/Charlene's Heartbeat/Gold Stars.

6-6:30 p.m. - The Roiter Family Cloggers.

7-8 p.m. - The Ice Cream Eating Contest.

8:15-8:45 p.m. - The Clintonaires.

## Saturday

11:45-2:30 p.m. - The auction.

2:45-3:15 p.m. - DeWitt Taekwando demonstration.

3:30-4 p.m. - Singer Jim Firos.

4:15-4:45 p.m. - Country Coyotes perform line dancing.

5-5:30 p.m. - Coyotes teach line dancing.

5:45-6:15 - Red Comet Performers/Charlene's Heartbeat/Gold Stars.

6:30 - p.m. - High Ground Gospel Group



Zack Monroe of DeWitt with a face full of ice cream at last year's Ice Cream Eating Contest during the five-year-old division. File photo.

8 p.m.-midnight - Street dance with the band Sawmill Road as entertainment.

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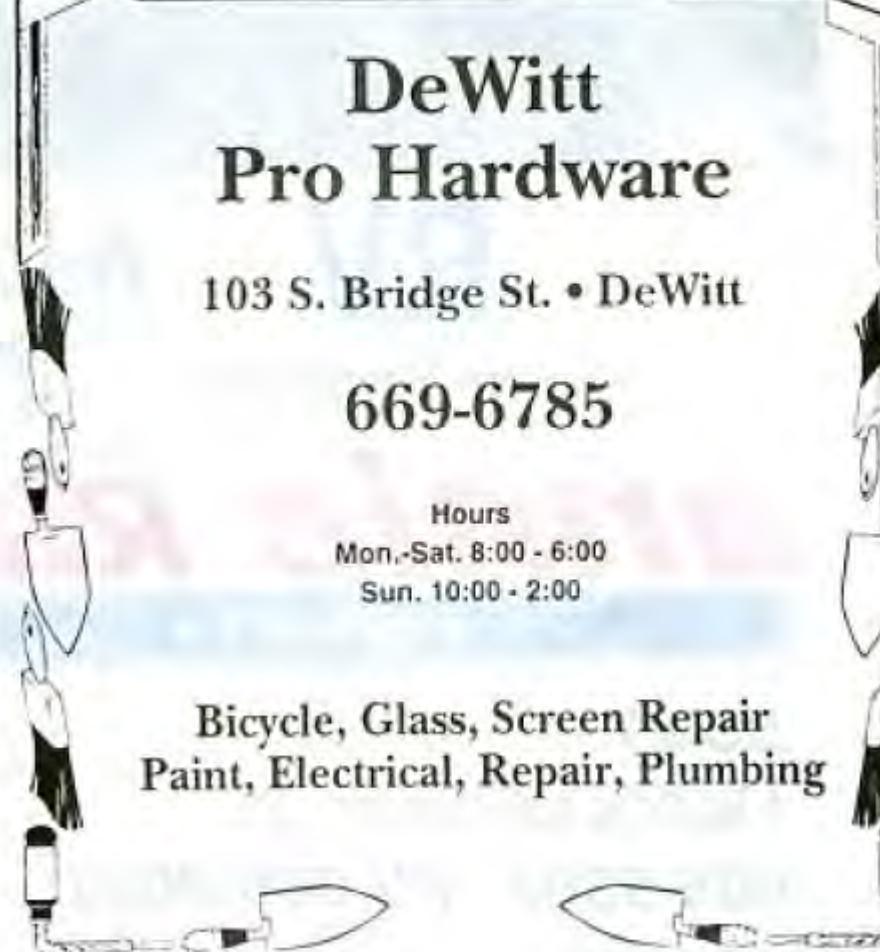
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# Volunteerism is key for every Ox Roast

Volunteers, from the board of the DeWitt Memorial Association to community members who work the food tent, make the Ox Roast happen each year.

The DeWitt Memorial Association officers and members are Rodger Brown, president; Larry Oliver, vice-president; Dona Gartside, treasurer; Nancy Baker, secretary; Peggy Haviland, booking agent; Debbie Brown; Marjean Pelkey-Nickerson; Rev. Mike Arnold; Cub Scouts; United Brethren Church; DeWitt Business Association; DeWitt Breakfast Lions; Mayor Mike Towns; Glenn Erin Pipe Band; Boy Scouts; Mid-Michigan Woodworkers Guild; the DeWitt Jaycees; the Downtown Development Association and the DeWitt Lioness Club.

Clubs and organizations participating in this year's Ox Roast are: DeWitt Business Association, sound system and Ice Cream Eating Contest; Prairie Creek Golf Course, golf carts; DeWitt Co-Op Pre-school, Creative Capers; Jaycees - coordinate Food Tent and preparation of food; DeWitt Breakfast Lions Club - Pot of Gold Raffle and Information Booth; DeWitt Community Church - face painting/Bible stories; L and L Shop-Rite - Frog Leap.

Proceeds from the DeWitt Ox Roast support the DeWitt Memorial Building located on Washington Street in downtown DeWitt.



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# Aug. 19 auction includes two cars and plenty more

The DeWitt Ox Roast auction is planned for Aug. 19 at noon downtown. In case of rain, the auction will move into the Memorial Building on Washington Street.

Highlighting this year's auction are two cars that are being donated by Annie Rae Chevrolet and Pat McCrackin Ford, both of DeWitt.

McCrackin donated a car in 1990 and Annie Rae gave one in 1994. This is the first year both companies have donated cars.

Other donations and contributors include a water softener from Culligan of DeWitt, a Coke canoe from L & L Shop-Rite of DeWitt, DeWitt Grain Elevator, DeWitt Town Pub, Keck's Appliance, Zeeb Animal Hospital, DeWitt Grain Elevator, DeWitt Auto Supply, DeWitt Auto Body, Bridge Street Hair Co., DeWitt Delta Medical Center, Euro Style, Michigan National Bank, Community First Bank, America's Choice RV, Bob Davis of Zep Manufacturing, King Mobile Homes, Henderson Family Jewelers, Michigan Apple Committee, Gold Standard Jewelry, Grumpy Bear Antiques, Prairie Creek Golf Course, Sam's Solid Oak, Norm Kessel Florist, DeWitt City Hall, Love Photo, DeWitt Memorial Association, and the Draft House. Businesses outside of DeWitt supporting the Ox Roast auction include MCP Cashway Lumber, Connexions Comedy Club, WITL, Aaron Enterprises, Joe's Western Wear, Highland Hills Golf Course, MSU, Detroit Tigers, Lansing Lugnuts, Governor John Engler, Radisson Hotel, Morganna the Kissing Bandit, Wayne Newton, Red Roof Inn, Waldo Travel, Cheddars, Mooney Oil, Boarshead Theatre, Central Michigan Lumber, Senator Spencer Abraham, Dennis Trailer Sales, Pepsi, Abatar



**DeWitt Culligan Water Conditioning** is again donating a water softener to the DeWitt Ox Roast Auction, Aug. 19, courtesy of Art Miller (left) and Dick Reust, owners. File photo.

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# Committees make Ox Roast come together

The following are committees involved in putting the Ox Roast together this year:

- Food Tent - Jaycee's
- Pot of Gold Raffle - DeWitt Breakfast Lions Club
- Program (sales and layout) - Chairman Marjean Nickerson
- Entertainment Stage - Chairman Nancy Baker
- DeWitt City Police - Chief Wendell Myers
- PA Systems and Advertising - Chairman Larry Oliver
- Arts and Crafts, Face Painting and Storytelling - Chairman Debbie Brown
- Transportation/golf carts (Prairie Creek) - Chairman Rodger Brown
- Ice Cream Eating Contest - DBA Chairman Chris Nestle
- Auction - Co-Chairman Marjean Nickerson and Don and Debbie Vorce
- Parade - Chairman Mike Arnold
- Bingo - Chairman Rodger Brown
- First Aid Station - Chairman Peggy Haviland
- Frog Leap - Chairman Gerry Nester
- Creative Capers - DeWitt Cooperative Preschool
- Pageant - Co-Chairman's, Dona Gartside and Karlyn Wickham
- License - Chairman Dona Gartside
- Banner - Chairman Terry Gartside
- Citizen of the Year, Past Mayors, Past Memorial Board Presidents - Chairman Rodger Brown

- Carnival - Chairman Rodger Brown

- 3 on 3 Basketball - Chairman Joe Joseph (Anthony's).

The DeWitt Ox Roast committee offers special thanks to the dedicated volunteers and service organizations in and around DeWitt who are helping make the 50th Anniversary Ox Roast a success. They are:

- Rodger Brown - Ox Roast coordinator;
- DeWitt Hardware - bottle propane gas hook-ups;
- Pat McCrackin Ford - parade cars;
- Annie Rae - parade cars;
- Rev. Mike Arnold - parade coordinator;
- Culligan Water Conditioning - water heater and softener;
- Don Vorce - auctioneer;
- Marjean Nickerson - auction and brochure coordinator;
- Lucas Nickerson - brochure art work;
- Larry Oliver - advertising;
- Gerry Nester - frog leap;
- Nancy Baker - stage entertainment;
- Debbie Brown - arts and crafts;
- Sheri Daniels - tractor pull;
- Dona Gartside - pageant;
- DeWitt City Police - traffic/security;
- DeWitt City Fire and Rescue - first aid station;
- Dave Graves and Lee Hodges - electric/s
- Don DeRosia - First of America Bank, Bingo;
- DeWitt City Fire/Rescue Ladies Auxiliary - breakfast for cleanup crew.



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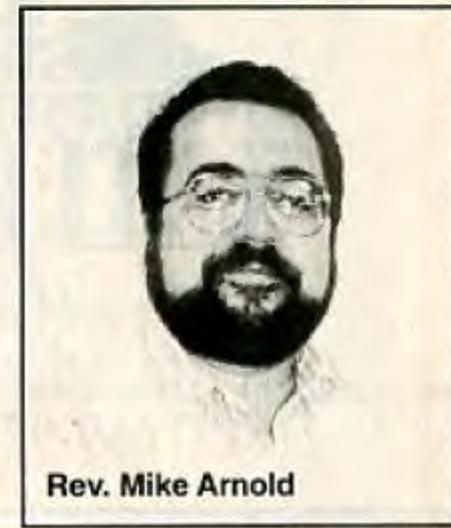
Peggy Haviland, booking



Debbie Brown



Marjean Pelkey-Nickerson



Rev. Mike Arnold



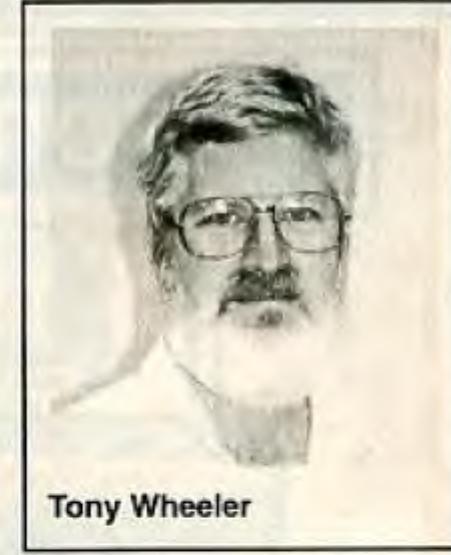
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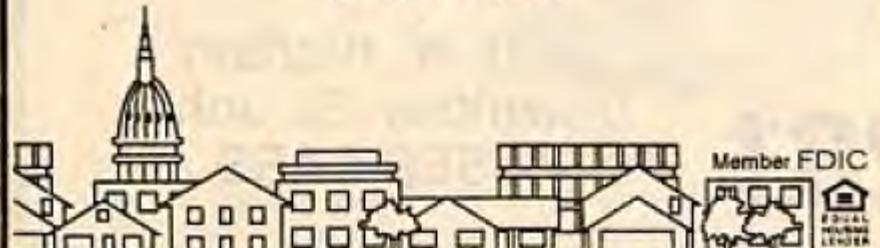
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1994 Ox Roast Queens (from left) DeWitt Little Princess Zoe Bambery, DeWitt Junior Miss Jill Gordon and Miss DeWitt Jacquelyn Fordyce. File photo. See page 1 for this year's queens.

## Pot 'O Gold raffle gives \$2,500 away

The annual Pot 'O Gold Raffle is underway again this year as the 50th Annual DeWitt Ox Roast approaches Aug. 18-20.

The raffle draws considerable interest each year from both the local and regional communities because of its' nine-pot format over a nine-hour drawing period that gives ticket holders \$2,500 in prize money.

The DeWitt Breakfast Lions Club operates the raffle for the DeWitt Memorial Association.

Tickets at a price of \$1 each or six for \$5 are available at selected merchants, or from any Breakfast Lions member.

Also, tickets are being sold Friday and Saturday during the Ox Roast at a booth near the downtown four-corners in DeWitt.

The format for this year's drawings, which start at 2 p.m. this year, is as follows:

2 p.m. - \$75.	6 p.m. - \$250.
3 p.m. - \$100.	7 p.m. - \$300.
4 p.m. - \$150.	8 p.m. - \$425.
5 p.m. - \$200.	9 p.m. - \$1,000.

You do not need to be present to win. For more information, see the Breakfast Lions at their booth Aug. 18-19.



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**Saturday - Frog Leaping Contest**  
All contestants are entered in the bike raffle  
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**Saturday - Auction**  
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