



MARTIN CHANG / THE RIP

Katelyn Diniz readies her cow minutes before showing it in The Cotton and Cream show, a show where girls of ages 9-14 design and model clothing for themselves and their cows, at The Kern County Fair on September 26th.

## SMITHING CRAFTS ALONG WITH WORDS

By Jon Nelson  
Reporter

Children watched in awe as a burly blacksmith forged rings out of white-hot iron and a woman with a charming Scottish accent told stories of metal workers from classical mythology.

This scene repeated itself four times daily at the Gypsy Time Traveler show at the Kern County Fair.

"I thought it was very creative and original," said audience member Katie Metz after the show.

The topic of each show encompasses a broad range of storytelling from different cultures all relating to blacksmithing. As Christy Horne tells the stories, her husband Michel Olson makes a variety of items using traditional metal working techniques. At the end of the show, the items made are raffled off to the audience members. Last year, they gave away 4,800 handmade items.

"I thought it was interesting when they were telling the myths," said Pat Aguilar when asked about her favorite part of the show.

The Gypsy Time Travelers describe their show as "edutainment" and "fabulous storytelling with live anvil accompaniment."

"We trick you into learning," said Horne with a grin.

Although the act may present itself as a children's show, it's actually intended for adults.

"Adults really love our show," said Horne.

The Gypsy Time Travelers was born almost 20 years ago in Columbia State Historic Park in Columbia, Calif. Originally the show focused on California Gold Rush related history, but expanded into different presentations based around storytelling and blacksmithing.

Horne and Olson decided to pack up and take the show on the road and this year is the couple's 15th year on the road.

The duo has 25 different half-hour presentations they put on for an audience which averages over 300 people. The show itself is given from a stage built into a rig that resembles a great wooden castle that the two have named Florence.

"It's constantly changing. I try to add more every year," said Horne enthusiastically.



GREGORY D. COOK / THE RIP

Michel Olson hammers down on a hot nail he's making during his Gypsy Time Travelers show on Sept. 24.



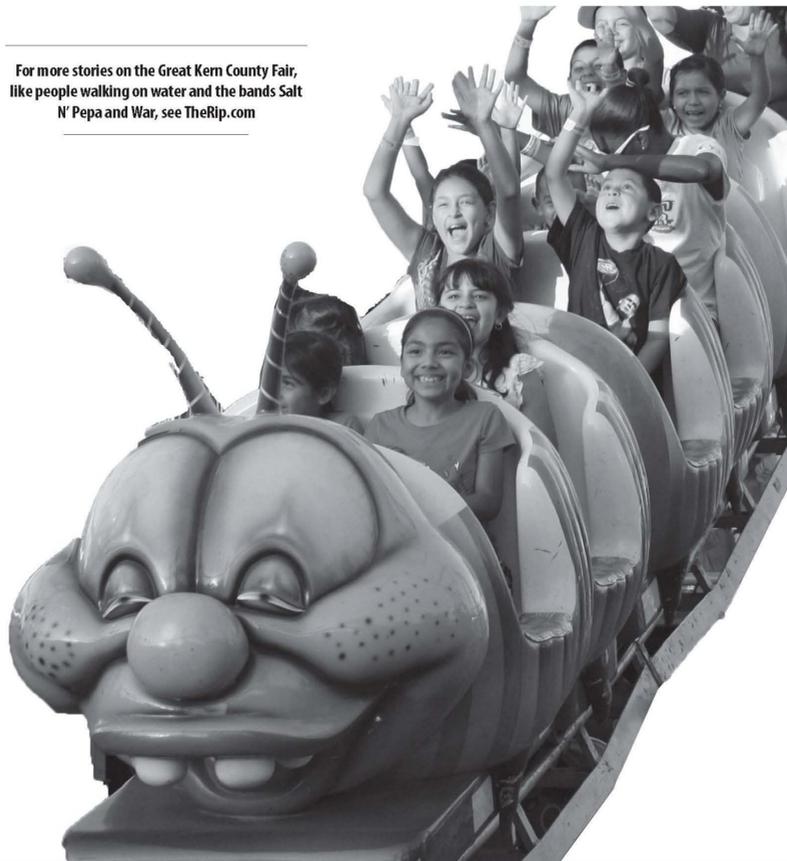
GREGORY D. COOK / THE RIP

A mother dairy cow nuzzles her new-born calf in the birthing pen of the Kern County Fair on Sept. 24. The calf, a female holstein, was the first calf born at this year's fair.

# THE GREAT KERN COUNTY FAIR

## THE YEARLY EXTRAVAGANZA HITS BAKERSFIELD BY STORM

For more stories on the Great Kern County Fair, like people walking on water and the bands Salt N' Pepa and War, see TheRip.com



## RODEOS FOR THE YOUNGEST COWBOYS

By Chrystal Fortt  
Features Editor



GREGORY D. COOK / THE RIP

Six-year-old Braden Weddell lands face down in the dirt after being thrown from the sheep he was attempting to ride during the Wool Riders show Sept. 24.

Wool Riders is one of Kern County Fair's newest and exciting attractions.

Kids ages six to three years old that weighed 60 pounds or less held on to wild sheep for their dear lives and a chance to win \$5,000.

Six kids are able to sign-up and compete in the same race. After they sign-up, all riders gear up in a helmet and body suit.

Each kid got ready to take their turn by a man helping them climb on top of the sheep as their parents give them encouragement.

Once the rider is clenching on to the sheep in a hugging position, the fence opens and each rider tries to stay on the sheep as long as they can.

Some sheep were more frantic than others, but most zoomed out of the fence as fast as they can.

The rider that stays on the longest wins first place and is able to go on to the national competition for a chance to win \$5,000.

Caleb Strencha from Oxnard won first place, but it wasn't his first time competing.

He also won first place in the Santa Barbara competition.

Caleb's advice for winning is, "Hold on tight and never let go."

Caleb was excited to win first place again. He likes to compete because he gets first place and wins medals.

Tammy and Clint Strencha, Caleb's parents, explained that Caleb loves competing and will be going on to the Fresno competition.

If he wins in Fresno, he can go on to the national competition in Las Vegas and win the \$5,000 prize.



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Steve Drivon [stage name Scrub], a member of the comedy music group The Rock Bottom Boys, smiles and plays his left-handed washboard at The Kern County Fair Main Plaza Stage on September 26th.



NATHAN WILSON / THE RIP

War member Stanley Behrens plays the harmonica during War's performance at the Great Kern County Fair on Sept. 21.