

CELEBRATING YEARS OF GOOD TIMES

“Celebrating 130 Years of Good Times” was theme of the recent Cache County Fair and Rodeo. This busy event has proven again to be a wonderful annual tradition. There are a multitude of community activities held throughout the year, but the County Fair and Rodeo is an event that has something for everyone. It is always rewarding to watch the excitement of young 4-H and FFA members as they display the results of their efforts. It is equally enjoyable to observe older friends engaged in friendly competition as they compare their best works, be that livestock, crops, home arts or some other category. For many local families, the County Fair and Rodeo is a highlight of the entire year. Our ability to celebrate 130 years of good times, comes from the voluntary efforts of a multitude of unpaid leaders and willing workers.

One man who has had a substantial impact on the “good times” at the Cache County Fair and Rodeo is Dean H. Parker. During his years of service as a County Commissioner, and later as manager of the Cache County Fair and Rodeo, Dean’s influence has been profound. Dean has always been one of those men who command respect whenever he is present. He was not conceited or cocky, but always confident, and had an unusual ability to make everything into a major event. Dean was there again this year, only days before his passing. I hope he had a great time during his final visit to an event that will always benefit from his capable leadership.

Dean, Lane, and Jared Parker have been auctioneers at the Junior Livestock Sale for many years. They have always been most gracious in sharing their talent and time in support of youth, families and businesses who are involved in the sale. It has always been tradition for Dean to begin the sale by singing “Oh What A Beautiful Morning, Oh What A Beautiful Day”. He did not sing this year. He was unable to do what he usually does, but he and Marilyn were there in support. For me, the highlight came as the microphone was passed to “Grandpa Dean” who sat in his wheel chair and he auctioned one lamb at the request of his great grandson, Ty. Most of us had a big lump in our throat and tears in our eyes as we listened to Dean’s final display of his famous auctioneer chant. That is one of the “good times” most of us will remember for years to come.

As a local agricultural Extension Agent, I have always been grateful for Dean’s knowledge of and influence in the livestock industry. He has traveled as widely as any agricultural man I know and is known and respected all across the country. He has truly been a great resource to our agricultural community. The Parker family’s ownership and management of the Smithfield Livestock Auction is one specific example. Our ability to market livestock locally would be terribly hampered if the auction were not available as a marketing source. Without livestock auctions, like Smithfield, price discovery would be nothing but a wild guess.

Not only has the Parker family been leaders in agricultural pursuits, they have also been influential in church and community affairs. For many years, our family has attended church in the same congregation with the Parkers. Class discussions were always enlightening when Dean was present. He knew the scriptures well and liked to share his knowledge with any who would listen. No one ever slept when Dean was at the pulpit. Though he used the microphone, he really didn’t need it. He had a

commanding voice and always spoke with conviction. He was powerful, yet genuine, gifted, yet teachable. He was a big man with a tender heart and often shed tears easily. Our family and other families have learned much from association with the Parkers. We have especially enjoyed reading Dean's life history that he shared with us just weeks ago. There will never be another man quite like Dean Parker.

The 2010 Cache County Fair will not be quite the same without Dean H. Parker. But the rest of the Parker family will continue to add their congenial influence with the horse show, at the sheep barn, in the home arts building, during the beef judging and at the Junior Livestock Auction. I have only pleasant memories of my association with Dean and Marilyn Parker. I, for one, will always celebrate the "good times" that have come from wonderful association with the Parkers.