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Ice Skaters join Fair parade, sign autographs

Ag Display offers fun features, contests throughout the parade

Champion U.S. figure skater Rachael Flatt, as well as pairs champions Keauna McLaughlin and Rockne Brubaker, will join the Evergreen State Fair's annual parade through Monroe this Saturday, Aug. 23, followed by an autograph session at the fair's Agricultural Display Booth.

Flatt is the reigning World Junior champion and U.S. silver medalist. McLaughlin and Brubaker are the U.S. pairs champions and 2007 World Junior champions. Both are scheduled to appear at this fall's 2008 Skate America event being held Oct. 24-26 at Comcast Arena in Everett.

The three skaters will take part in the state fair parade down Main Street, Monroe, which runs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. From there, they'll head over to the fair, where they'll be available to sign autographs from 2:30 to 5 p.m. just through the entrance at the West Gate of the fair. The figure skaters will make appearances at other booths during that time as well.

Following their autograph sessions, the three will be the celebrity judges for the fair's first of several ice-cream making contests.

In addition to ice-cream making, the Agricultural Display Booth will host a number of contests and activities throughout the fair, which began Thursday, Aug. 21, and runs through Monday, Sept. 1. Fairgoers can enjoy a good grape stomp or try their hand at speed corn shucking.

Perhaps more fulfilling is the chance to see prominent chefs create dishes out of locally grown crops followed by a taste. Highlighting the "Chef of the Day" segments will be Russell Lowell, Larry Fontaine and Keith Luce.

Lowell's culinary career has spanned 32 years, starting at the age of 16. Owner of a premier catering service as well as three venues – Garden Café in Woodinville, Russell's on Wall Street in Seattle and Russell's of Bothell – Lowell uses a vast array of traditional and non-traditional foods ranging from vegetarian fare to wild game.

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Fontaine brings more than 18 years of experience to the table, and is now the executive chef for Comcast Arena in Everett. He has a natural flair for hard work and zest, and loves to cook in bulk: Fontaine has served more than 3,800 cheese cakes, 17,000 Great American Feast Dinners, 6,200 sirloin and salmon dinners as well as more than 7,400 cheese and cracker platters.

Luce took the helm as The Herbfarm's executive chef in 2007. As a youngster, he worked in his grandfather's Italian restaurant in the Hamptons. Following an early, yet illustrious career, Luce was tapped by the White House as sous chef to the President of the United States during the first Clinton administration.

Finally, the Agricultural Display booth is harnessing solar power this year to power its electrical needs, lights and a biodiesel production unit during the fair. The county will produce enough energy from the sun to produce enough fuel to run the fair vehicles on biodiesel – a cleaner burning fuel. Demonstrations of the county's biodiesel initiative will be ongoing throughout the fair, and at 12:30 p.m., Aug. 25, there will be a lively debate at the Evergreen Stage about food versus fuel.

For a complete listing of displays and events, visit the county's Agricultural Display booth.

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