



Don Simpson, Glenn Rudd and Bill Ledbetter determine the winners.

## Residents turn out for youth at county fair competition

By ELLEN GREENEY

County Fairs are as American as apple pie. Future Farmers of America and 4-H club members are often the mainstay of entrants; seeking coveted ribbons, plaques and trophies with titles such as Best of Show and Grand Champion.

No county fair would be complete without judges to assess the merits of every entry and decide on winners. That's where Sun City residents came in, at December's Williamson County Youth Fair.

Photography competition is one Youth Fair component.

For the past two years, Crystal Fulwider, photography division supervisor, asked Sun City's Wes Odell to recruit volunteers to serve as judges of the photographs.

Joining Mr. Odell as judge-

es were Peggy Reeder, Don Simpson, Glenn Rudd, Mike Biggs, Ursula Pinner, Bill Ledbetter, Carlos Rio and John Leek.

All of these judges are skilled photographers in their own right. Along with Mr. Odell, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Rudd and Mr. Ledbetter have served as judges in previous years.

Many of the photography judges are Sun City residents and members of the Sun City Photography Club. However, that is not a requirement to become a judge.

"I select local photographers with whom I'm familiar and who I believe have the skills to judge this type event," Mr. Odell said. "Sun City residents are retired and typically have time to take on

*Continued on 6*

## Residents turn out for youth competition

*Continued from 1*

this project and the ones who judge are experienced photographers. It's a nice community service activity and all the judges get enjoyment doing it."

Judges assessed more than 200 photos in three major areas; impact, composition and light.

Once submitted, photographs are divided into categories; first into four age groups, then into subject categories, (such as domestic animals, wildlife, nature, people and food.)

Typically, 9 to 10 volunteers serve as judges and each judge is assigned one or two categories.

"They like us to rank all images within each category by age, down to 10th place," Mr. Odell said. "And they want us to make short comments on every image. We make every attempt to write

only positive or helpful comments. It's a way for us to mentor and encourage each young photographer."

As a novice judge for this event, Ms. Reeder described her experience:

"I had one of the larger categories, Domestic Animals (cats, dogs, goats and horses)," she said. "So, Wes worked with me and we graded 47 images in about two-and-a-half hours."

"In the process, you quickly realize that the technical attributes are easy to grade. Everyone can see whether or not an image is in focus or well lighted. But, the subjective areas (creativity and impact) are much more difficult because they are so susceptible to personal preference, and you try very hard to be fair and even-handed."

Some of the judges are asked to judge other area contests as well.

"We don't ever want to meet the kids; winners or otherwise," Mr. Odell explained. "We might see their work again in other contests or this fair next year. Our judging needs to be blind. I'm involved

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**Wes Odell**  
photography judge

with judging four different youth events and I'm sure some of the entrants are the same, which is allowed. Sometimes I recognize the same photo."

In a thank-you letter to the judges, Ms. Fulwider wrote: "I know that the kids place a great deal of importance on the opinion of a judge. They truly take your evaluations to heart and strive to make sure they understand how they can improve going forward. Much of the success we have in 4-H would not be possible without people like you giving something of yourself to encourage and critique the work the kids do. You are all a vital part of our program, even if you never step foot in our classrooms."

"I've had many positive responses concerning the judging. You all judged 213 photos which is a record. (In) the second phase — choosing the grands, reserves, and best of show, I really enjoyed the level of debate in selecting the top winners and have told the kids just how hard some of those choices were."

51

77