



PRINCE ALBERT EXHIBITION

GRANDSTAND/OPTIMIST CENTRE



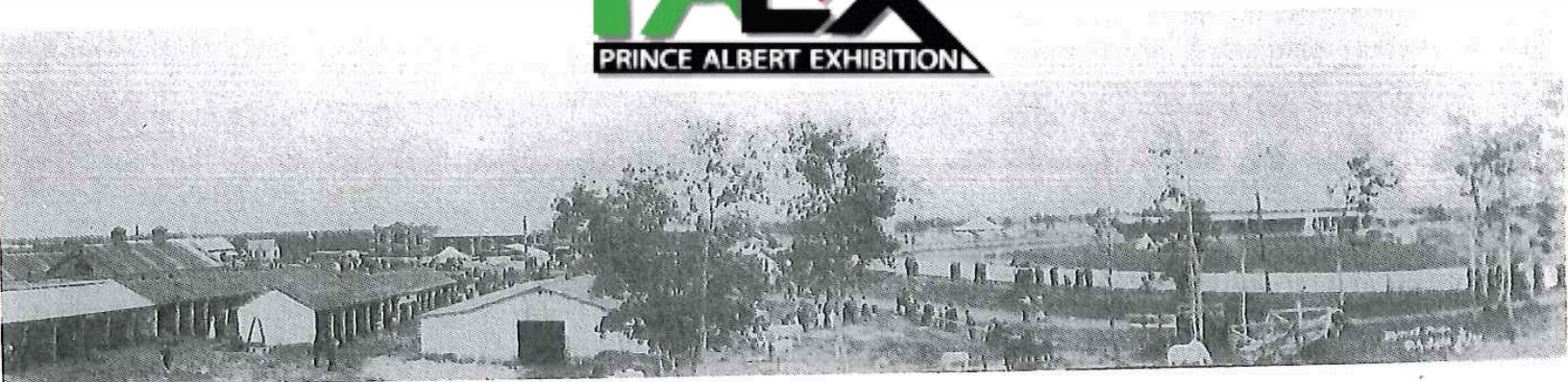
GRANDSTAND HISTORY

The first Grandstand was built facing south; together with a barn in 1898 - at a cost of \$2,500.00. Three stables were constructed on the grounds by the Turf Club and the Society, and lunch booths were situated on the grounds. That year saw the purchase of a new 'track finisher' and a building that was 100 by 24 feet to be removed after the racing season. Now horse racing could be truly appreciated. Each year new buildings were added as the Society strove to improve the grounds.

This Grandstand was destroyed by fire in 1920 despite the Society's efforts of spraying water on it prior to each performance. In 1928 the existing Grandstand was demolished and a new one was built facing north with the addition of a new modern Race Track at a cost of \$5,366.20. This Grandstand was kept in fairly good shape by the Society and City sharing the costs of repair and upkeep. In 1936 the City was responsible for repainting the Grandstand and in 1940 the Society took the burden of redoing the roof and repainting the entire structure.

In 1955 a fire caused considerable damage to the Grandstand, so in late 1955-1956 the remainder of the building was demolished and replaced with a new one.

Once again in 1963 fire ravaged the grandstand. Reconstruction of a new Grandstand began in 1963-1964 on the identical site of the previous one. However, this time the Society constructed the building entirely of reinforced concrete at a cost of \$99,000.00.



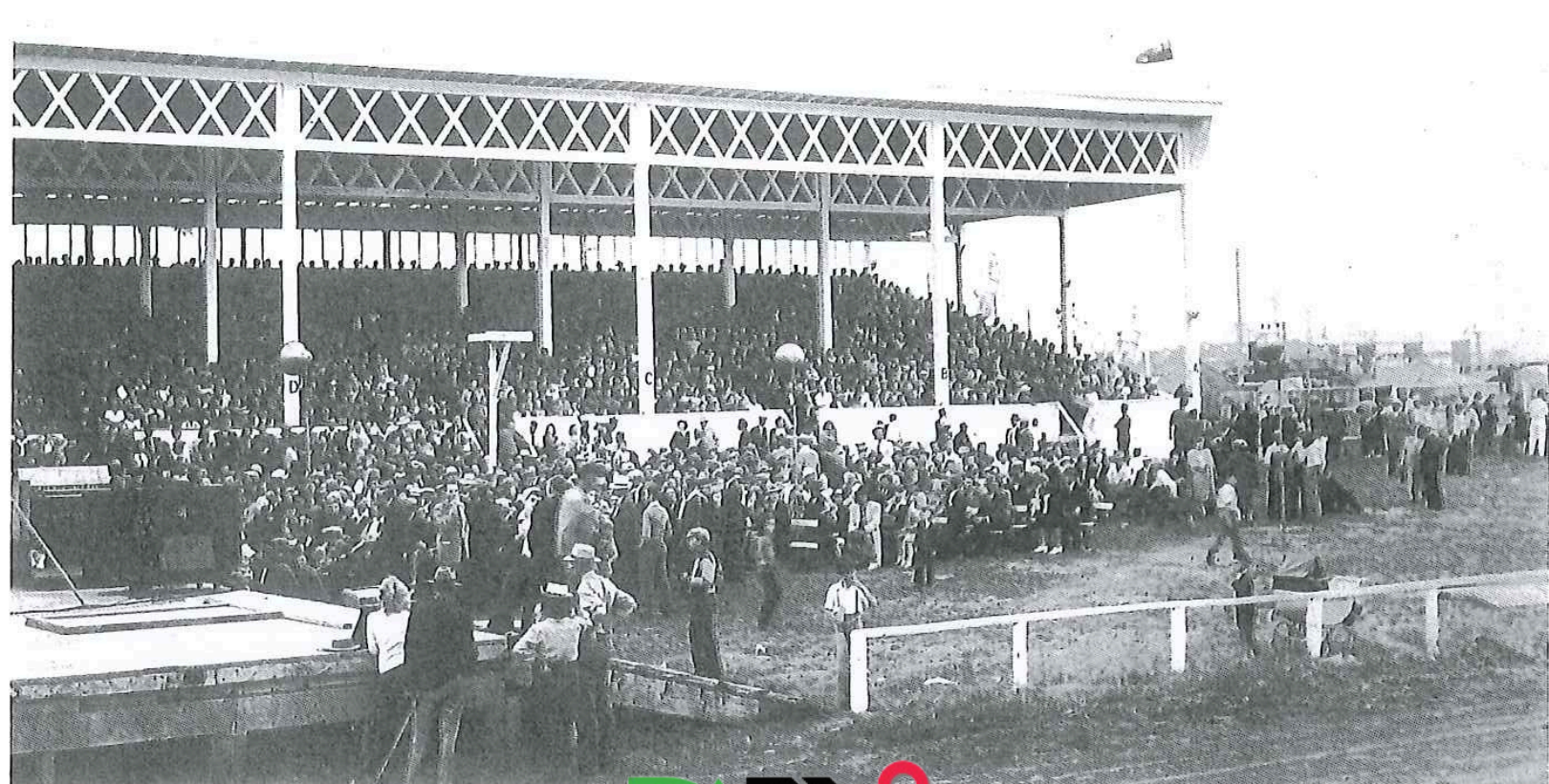
Grandstand and Race Track facing South.
(Photo Courtesy Prince Albert Exhibition Association)

GRANDSTAND HISTORY

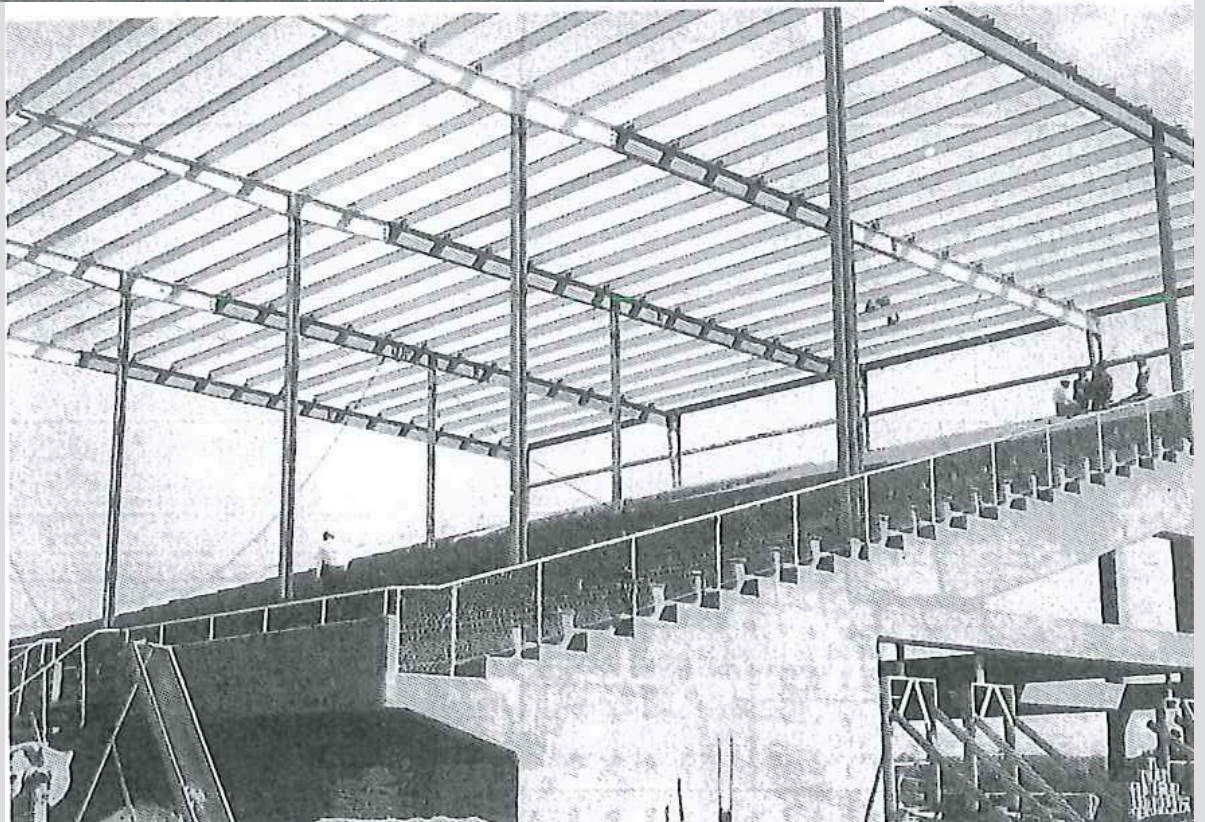
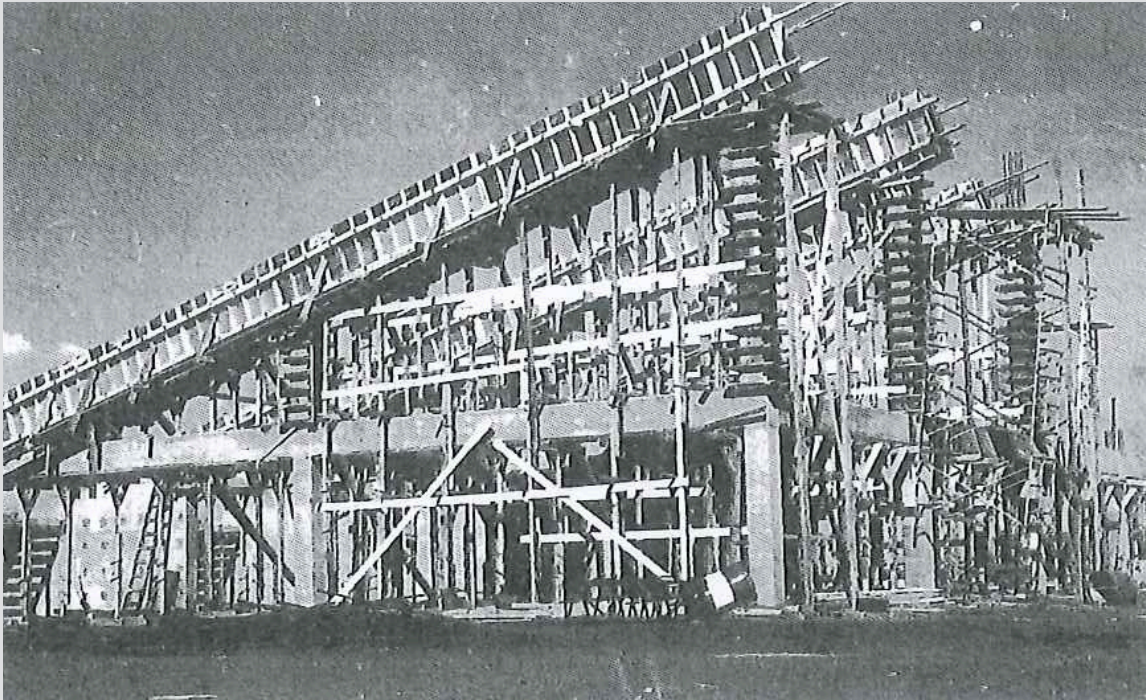
The area underneath the Grandstand was left vacant due to finances - but with the understanding that one day a building would be built in this space. In the meantime, the Society applied a variety of uses to this section. An assortment of booths were set up under the Grandstand; the Optimist Club had their Beer Garden situated there, and a restaurant occupied a space.

Through 1977 and into 1978 the Society held discussions with various groups concerning funding for the completion of the Grandstand. The Optimist Club agreed to put up \$100,000.00 if they were allowed a room in the new structure and if the Society were able to finance the balance. An agreement was 'struck' when the Society obtained Federal and Provincial grants totaling \$125,000.00.

The remainder of the cost was borne by the Society itself. The completed structure now houses the new Exhibition offices, the Optimist Center, and an area upstairs which is used by the Society during Fair week for their banquets. There are washrooms, changing rooms, and a kitchen area also occupies the top floor.



GRANDSTAND HISTORY



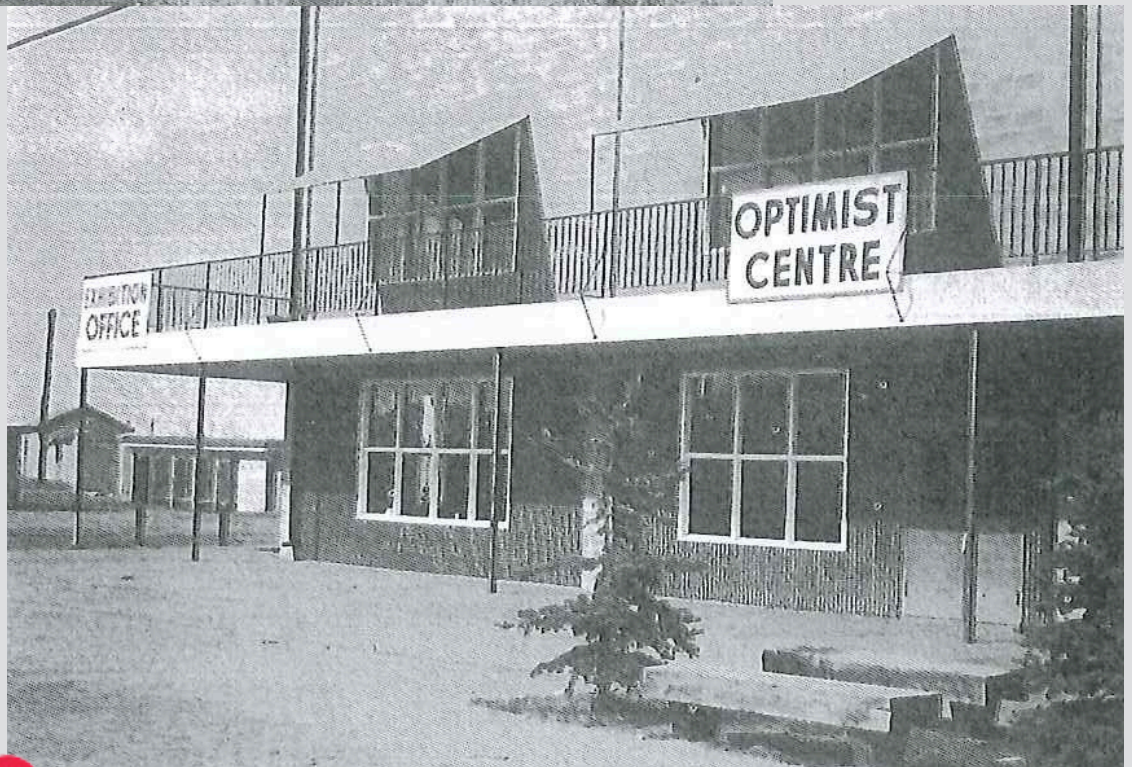
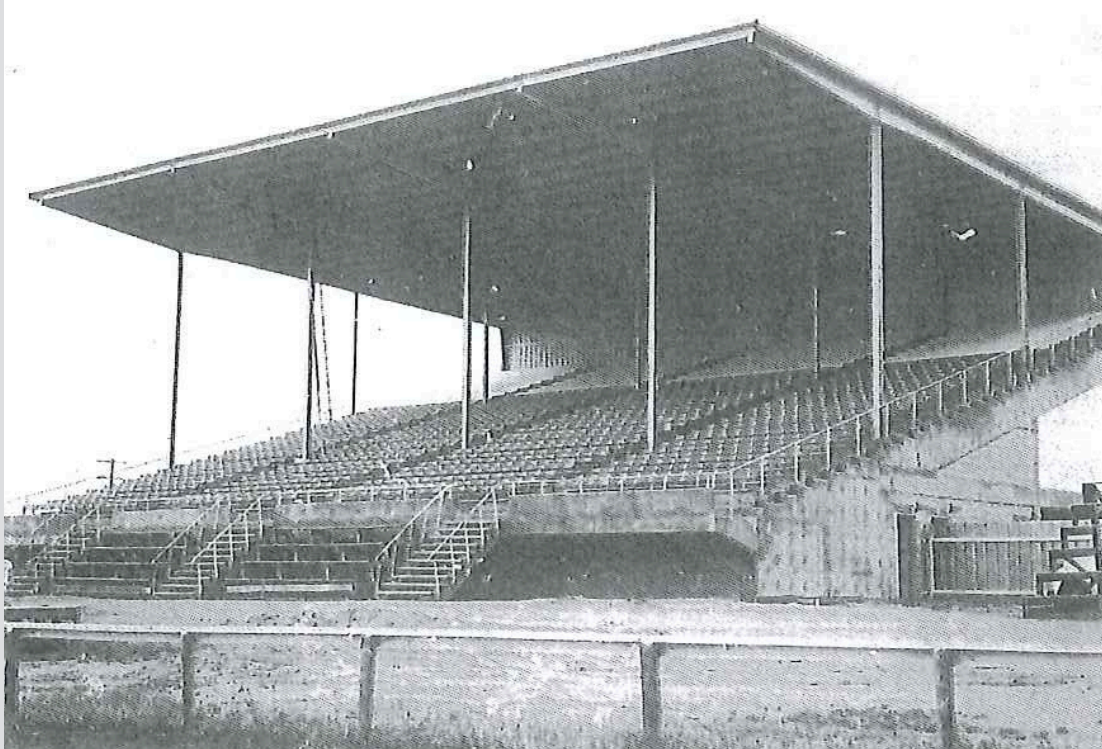
Two phases in reconstruction of the concrete Grandstand.

(Photo Courtesy Prince Albert Exhibition Association)



GRANDSTAND HISTORY

Concrete Grandstand completed 1964.
(Photo Courtesy Prince Albert Exhibition Association)



New structure under the Grandstand occupied by the Exhibition Office and the Optimist Centre.

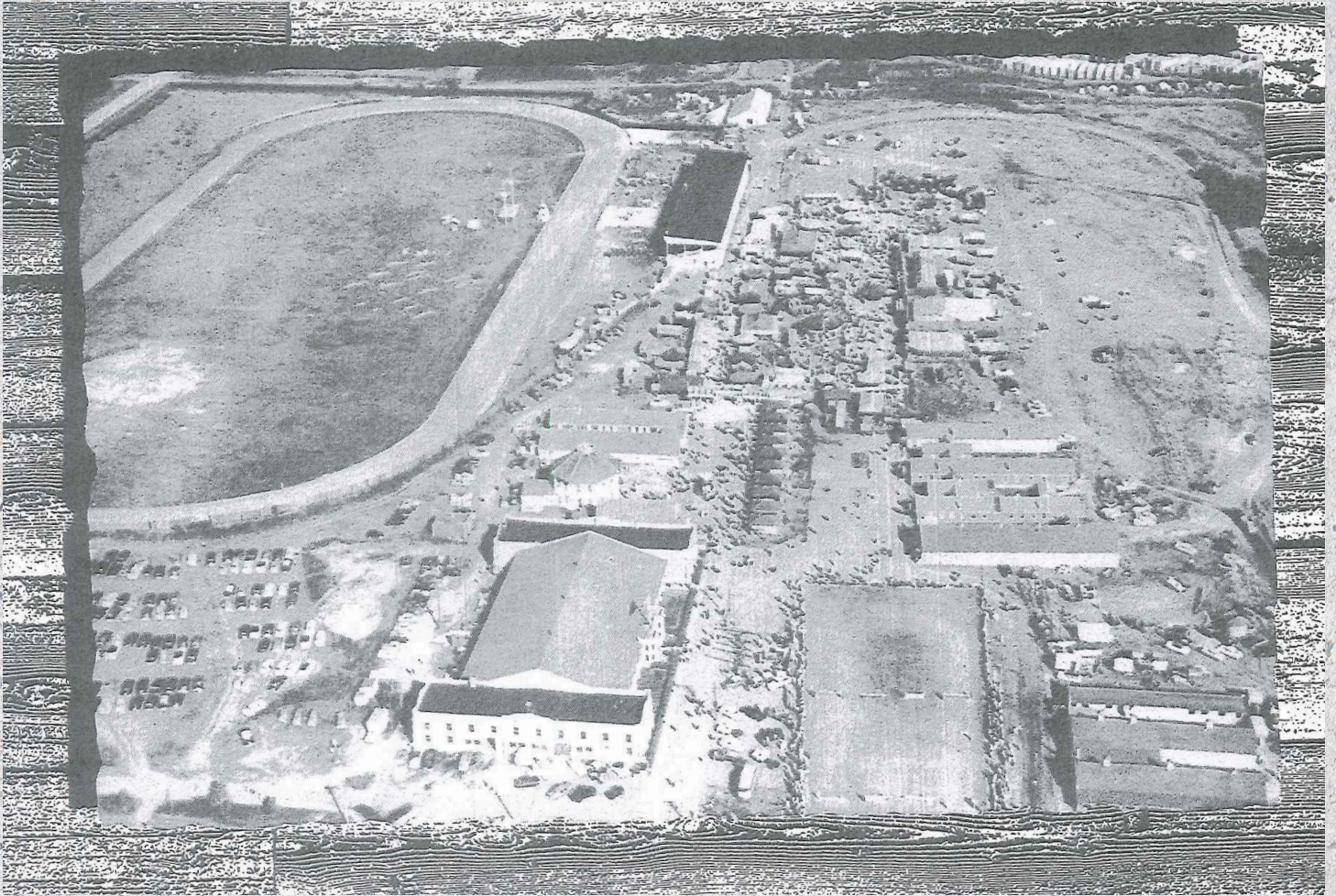
(Photo Courtesy Wendy Frith)

GRANDSTAND HISTORY



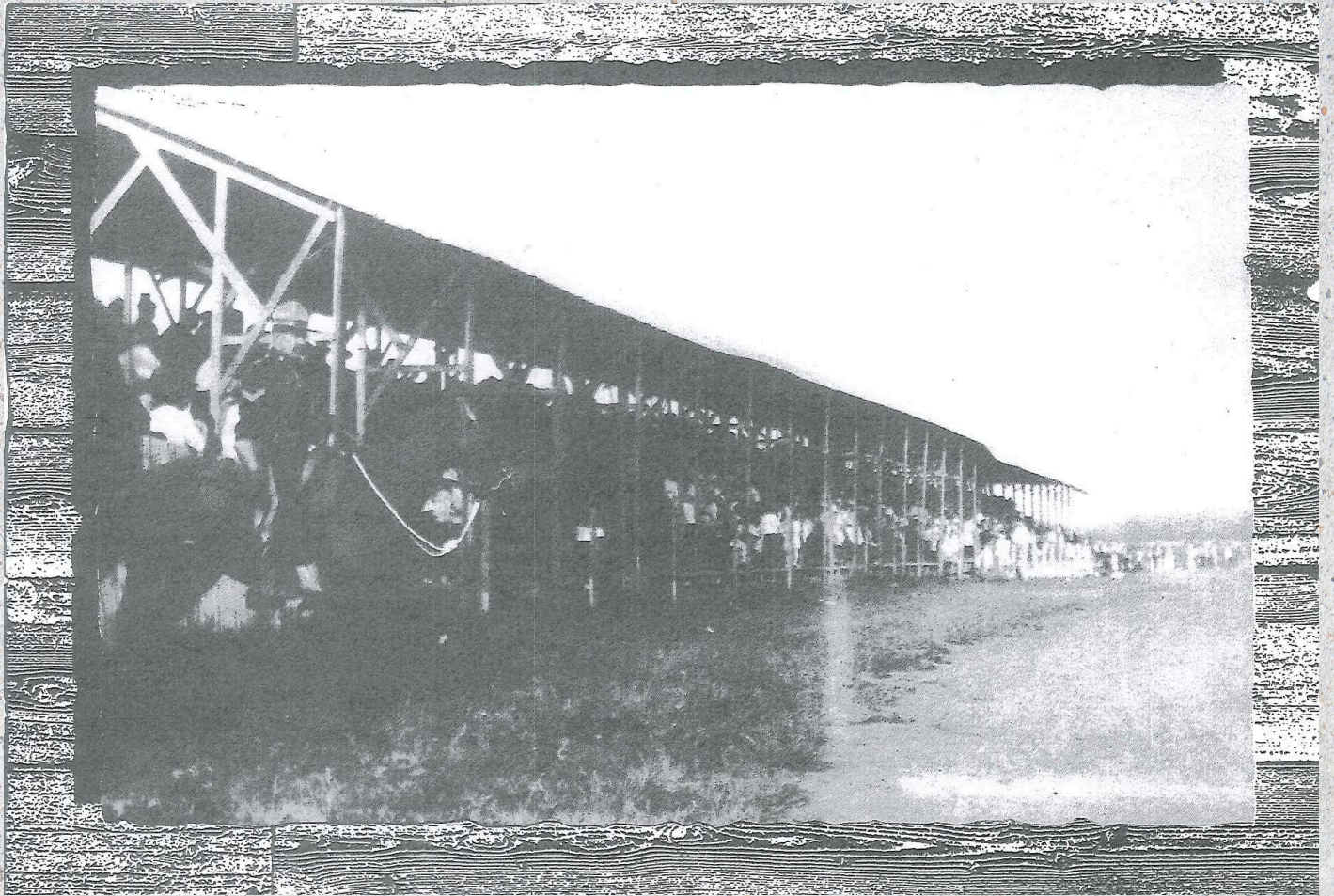
Chariot racer Bob Robertson in 1914 before the roof was installed on the grandstand.

GRANDSTAND HISTORY



Mile long track, before the grandstand burned. Note Domtar Wood Preservers in background.

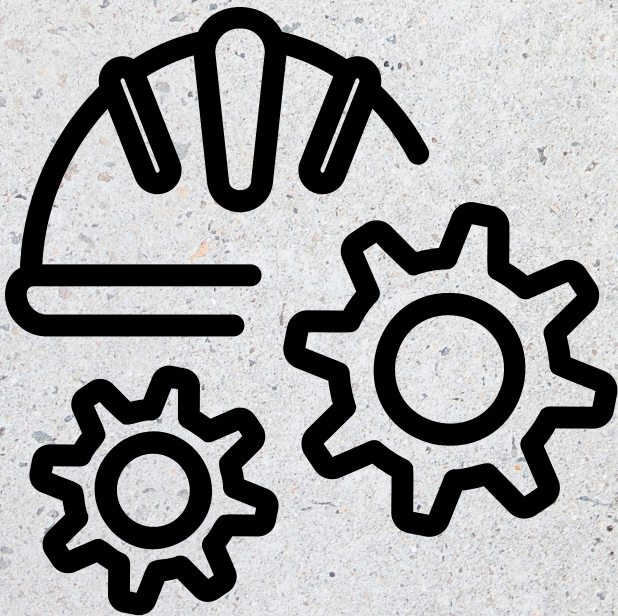
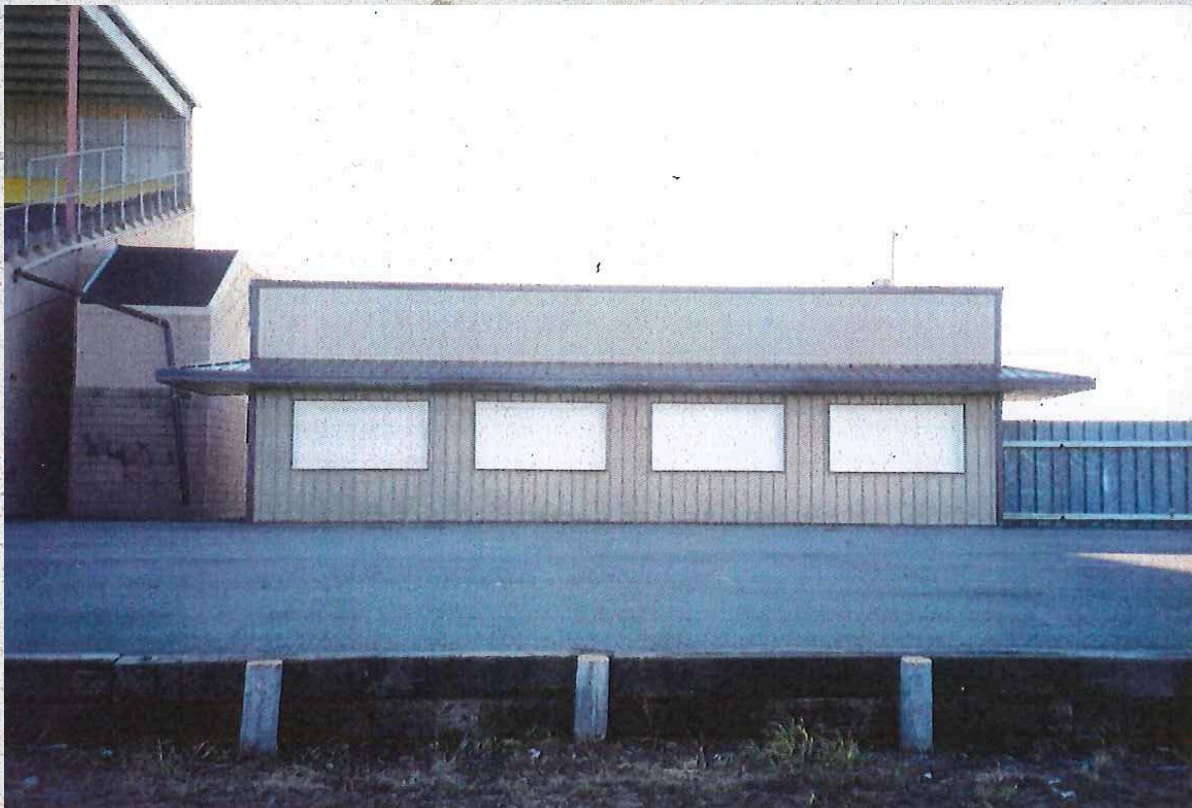
GRANDSTAND HISTORY



Prince Albert Fair in the early days, after the roof had been built on the grandstand which was facing south.

1999

NEW GRANDSTAND FOOD BOOTH



This year we constructed a new grandstand food booth. We put it in a different location than the old one and we hope that this new spot will be more efficient for our patrons.



2004

RESIDING THE GRANDSTAND



2006 PAINTED GRANDSTAND



JULY 2022

GRAND STAND PATCHING, CAULKING AND PAINTING



BEFORE



JULY 2022

GRAND STAND PATCHING, CAULKING AND PAINTING



BEFORE



JULY 2022

GRAND STAND PATCHING, CAULKING AND PAINTING



AFTER



JULY 2022

GRAND STAND PATCHING, CAULKING AND PAINTING



AFTER



2022 GRAND STAND PATCHING, CAULKING AND PAINTING



2020

YWCA STEPPING STONES SHELTER - MAIN FLOOR



YWCA staff, Rob Dunlop (Homeward Bound Manager) and Tonya Kleinert (Stepping Stones Shelter supervisor) pose inside Stepping Stones Shelter Wednesday. (Alison Sandstrom/paNOW Staff)

STEPPING STONES

By Alison Sandstrom

New cold weather shelter opens in P.A.

Nov 5, 2020 | 8:32 AM



YWCA STEPPING STONES SHELTER - MAIN FLOOR

2020



Staff have tried to remove as many of the barriers that prevent people from using shelters as possible, including reviewing rules and providing additional storage space for belongings.

2020 - YWCA STEPPING STONES

SHELTER - MAIN FLOOR

The YWCA's new cold weather shelter is now open. Developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Stepping Stones Shelter – at the grandstand at the Prince Albert Exhibition grounds – has twice as many beds as the previous winter shelter located in the basement of Our House downtown. It also features a more comfortable and welcoming environment, extended hours, more staff, and a direct connection with the YWCA's Homeward Bound program to allow interested people to quickly get into temporary or permanent housing.

Rob Dunlop, manager of Homeward Bound, said the primary focus of the previous cold weather shelter was to prevent people from freezing to death – a tragedy that occurred four times during the winter before it opened. The new expanded location has additional broader goals.

“I see it very much as a gateway into permanent housing for a lot of the people that are out on the street right now,” he said.

The causes of homelessness are numerous, explained Dunlop, but trauma is at the root of almost all of them and providing housing first is the key.

“Drug addiction, mental health issues, alcoholism – those are just symptoms of something else and it's getting to the something else that you can't do when you're living out on the street,” he continued.

“And so this [shelter] will be an introduction to help, basically... the hand is out, if they want to take it, it's here.”

City council approved the development permit for the new cold weather shelter in mid-October. The three weeks since has seen a flurry of renovations at the grandstand building.

Aside from being roughly four times the size of the basement at Our House, Stepping Stones Shelter boasts a spacious kitchen, from which Prince Albert Grand Council will cook nightly hot, nutritious meals and a physically-distanced dining room. Showers have been installed in the bathrooms. There are also laundry facilities. The shelter will be closed for six hours a day for cleaning and everyone entering will have their temperature checked and be asked questions to screen for COVID-19.

Most of the funding for the new cold weather shelter comes from a federal pot of money for homelessness, which was topped up this year in response to COVID-19.

While the shelter is currently set to operate until April 30, 2021, funding pending, the YWCA plans to continue it next winter. Dunlop said he'd like to see it as a 24-hour space where people can stay temporarily while they get connected to services.

For now, staff are focused on putting the finishing touches on renovations and welcoming their first clients.

“It's pretty exciting to know that we're part of something that's new and has the potential to change lives,” Dunlop said.



Source: <https://panow.com/2020/10/14/steppingstonesshelter>

2023 - YWCA STEPPING STONES SHELTER - MAIN FLOOR



A person sleeps on a Prince Albert city sidewalk in late fall. (file photo/paNOW)

HOMELESSNESS IN PRINCE ALBERT

By Susan McNeil

Homeless shelter to increase to 40 beds

Oct 13, 2023 | 4:00 PM

With winter quickly approaching, the Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter is again set to open at the Exhibition Grounds, but this time they plan to have 40 beds. In previous years, the shelter has operated with 25 beds which would be expanded as needed.



2023/paNow/stepping/stones/shelter

2023 - YWCA STEPPING STONES SHELTER - MAIN FLOOR

Prince Albert's YWCA has operated Stepping Stones since it was first started in 2020 as a pandemic emergency measure and is applying to operate it again this year.

According to its submission to council, the YWCA anticipates working with the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) as it has in other years along with volunteer organizations.

The SHA, Prince Albert Police, social services and other groups are involved as well.

With the added beds this year, at least three trained staff will be on duty at all times. They will be wearing panic buttons in case of emergency.

Cameras will also be placed inside and outside of the shelter and the YWCA is working with police to create a response plan if problems arise.

Security guards will be onsite at all times to help with the shelter and patrol the grounds.

The YWCA says that in the years it has operated so far, they have not had any major incidents.







Optimist Centre under the Grand Stand 1978 - 1993 \$100,000

1978

OFFICIAL OPENING

The new Prince Albert Optimist Club centre below was officially opened Monday at the Prince Albert Exhibition Grounds. Participating in the ribbon-cutting ceremonies were, from left, top photo: Roger William, Optimist Club president; Frank Moore, life member; Selmer Sandaa, Optimist Club representative; R.B. McCulloch, life member; and Tom Cartier, Exhibition Association president.

1993

OPTIMISTS BURN MORTGAGE

Clem Kent, the immediate past governor of District 13 for the Optimist Club, watches as the mortgage for the Optimist Centre goes up in flames. Kent presented Doug MacKenzie, the manager of the Prince Albert Exhibition Association, with a cheque for almost \$5,000 as final payment for the centre, which was built 21 years ago underneath the grandstand at the Exhibition Grounds. The presentation was made at the Prince Albert Optimist Club's Harvest Ball on Saturday. George Lewko was also presented with the President's Citation for being an outstanding Optimist club member and Del Anderson received a life membership to the Prince Albert Optimist Club. The ball was also the charter night for the Gateway Optimist Club of Prince Albert.

OPTIMIST CENTRE

Air Cadet Squadron

April 12th, 2025

Landed Helicopter in the Middle of Grandstand Track



Air Cadet Squadron

April 12th, 2025

Landed Helicopter in the Middle of Grandstand Track

