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Meet You At The Fair!!

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Meet You At The Fair!!

By Annabeth Miller

Just as sure as the sun sets in the west, the seasons change and the long, hot summer gives way to crisp autumn days.

Part of the fun of autumn are the traditions that abound in a small town. Traditions like football games, marching bands, and the annual county fair.

The Stoddard County Fair has always been a fun time. Now in its 85th year, the Fair is all about traditions and fun and small town values - all rolled into one!

I can remember working with my mom in the kitchen many years ago, making sugar cookies to take to the fair. They had just a touch of a "secret" ingredient that made them extra special - a little bit of orange rind. I'm sure other cooks put orange rind in their sugar cookies, but I thought my mom was a genius when she suggested it, and was positive that my special sugar cookies would win a prize. They did - a blue ribbon that is still tucked away some place in a shoe box. And I got some prize money, too, that was promptly spent on the midway (probably on a caramel apple).

It was fun this week to see that same sense of excitement from a Dexter FFA member, who was thrilled to see he had won a blue ribbon for the soybeans he had entered at the fair!

The county fair is one of those annual events that bring our entire community - the entire county - together. You see old friends at the parade, and promise to meet down at the fair. Folks enjoy the crisp, cool evenings and swap stories and trade local gossip. You catch up on what's been happening, and make plans to get together again.

I always look forward to Fair week, even though it is very busy time. But it is usually a fun kind of busy. There's the parade on Tuesday and this year there's local musical talent on the Midway Stage. I'm looking forward to hearing Maggi Thorn on Saturday evening.

Part of the fun of the fair is watching the kids. Youngsters who have taken the time to learn from their parents about the care needed to raise sheep, hogs, cattle. And then are proud to bring them to the county fair. The lessons the youngsters learn from the judge are important, too. He has taken a lot of time and care into his instructions to the kids - and took that extra bit of time to teach the finer points of showmanship.

When you stand back and look at it, the fair really is representative of what makes life in small, rural Missouri special. There's the families from the farms, with their animals and crops, and the civic organizations all working together serving hamburgers, hot dogs, and the famous funnel cakes and fired Oreos. There are the groups with booths, and volunteers who make the whole thing work – the fun and camaraderie that puts an extra touch on the entire scene.

Fall is here, and with it are some great traditions. See you at the fair!

Annabeth Miller is the editor of the ShowMe Times and a lifelong resident of Dexter.

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