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Fall Festival

Crowds enjoy games, music at annual event

Ginny Farmer / Staff Writer
September 20, 2006

The Fall Festival at Duck Samford Park was the place to be Tuesday night for families wanting to spend some time enjoying the great weather, playing games, winning prizes and having a good time with friends. It was Auburn City Schools' way of kicking off the fall season and raising money for the Parent-Teacher Associations at all nine city schools and the organization FACES. ADVERTISEMENT

Visitors to the festival bought 50-cent tickets to spend at a variety of booths sponsored by schools or civic clubs, where they could play games like basketball, visit the petting zoo, or buy a hot dog and cotton candy.

Carolyn Crandell, this year's chairwoman of the festival, said the event has been around in some form for more than 50 years - held in different places with different names, such as the Halloween Carnival.

"It just keeps growing," she said, adding that she was pleased with this year's turnout. "The weather turned out perfect."

Crandell estimated the festival raised about \$17,000 (before expenses), but a final tally was yet to be determined last night.

Betsy Stallworth, a first-grade mother, spent the evening working at Ogletree Elementary's Sucker Pull. Boys and girls used tickets to pick out suckers, and won a prize based on the color at the bottom of the sucker.

Stallworth said this was her first year participating in the event.

"It's a great way for families to get together," Stallworth said. "And you get to see everybody you've ever known. It's a nice non-denominational mix."

Fun-seekers walking past the lines of people 15-deep at every booth might have noticed recycling outlets for plastic and aluminum, the Dean Road Koosh Ball Booth, Wrights Mill Wheel of Fortune, a Sponge Toss, moonwalk, Kiwanis Shooting Gallery and Rotary Ball Throw, as well as many more booths.

At the far end of the field was a stage where the band Solace entertained the masses with Christian rock.

Paul Eason, a senior at Auburn High School, sings and plays guitar in the band. He said the name Solace means peace.

"It's been awesome to worship out here with people I've never seen before," Eason said. "God put us together. We're just here to praise him and lift him up and give him the glory."

Behind the stage, with smoke billowing from its door, was the Lee County Firefighters Association's training trailer. Lt. Robert Hodge of the Auburn Department of Public Safety's fire division said the trailer is used to teach students how to get out of a burning building.

With shaking shutters, and simulated smoke and lightning, the trailer is taken by firefighters to different schools during Fire Prevention Week in October. Hodge said the students were enjoying the smoky "house," some going through it half a dozen times.

Over at the petting zoo, the Graddy family was having a great time. With Kyle, 6, Amelia, 4, and Karlyn, 1, Graddy and her husband had their hands full.

"They loved the petting zoo. My youngest daughter loved the moonwalk," Graddy said. "We just came out here to support the schools. We came last year, too. It's great for the kids, and the entertainment's good."

Crandell said she was grateful for all the volunteers who helped make the festival a success. "I'm so thankful to everybody - the parents, volunteers from churches, fraternities - we couldn't do it without really everybody pitching in."

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An unidentified suspect entered the home of a 23-year-old Monday evening and kidnapped him and another victim, according to a report filed with the Auburn Police Division.

A 21-year-old female and the male, whose names are not being released at this time, became victims of a burglary and kidnapping around 8:45 p.m.

"(The victims) reported to us that a subject entered the residence of one of the victims and made the two victims get into a vehicle belonging to one of them," said Capt. Tom Stofer with the Auburn Police Division.

According to the police report, there was a firearm used in the burglary and kidnapping.

The suspect drove around the Auburn area for about 30 minutes before the accused kidnapper stopped the car and got out, according to Stofer.

No one was injured and nothing was stolen, but burglary is defined as entering someone's home with the intent to commit a crime.

The victims reported the incident to the police station at 9:30 p.m.

The police have a description of the suspect, but detectives are not releasing the information at this time.

Anyone with information that may help police locate the suspect should contact the Auburn Police Division at 501-3110.

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