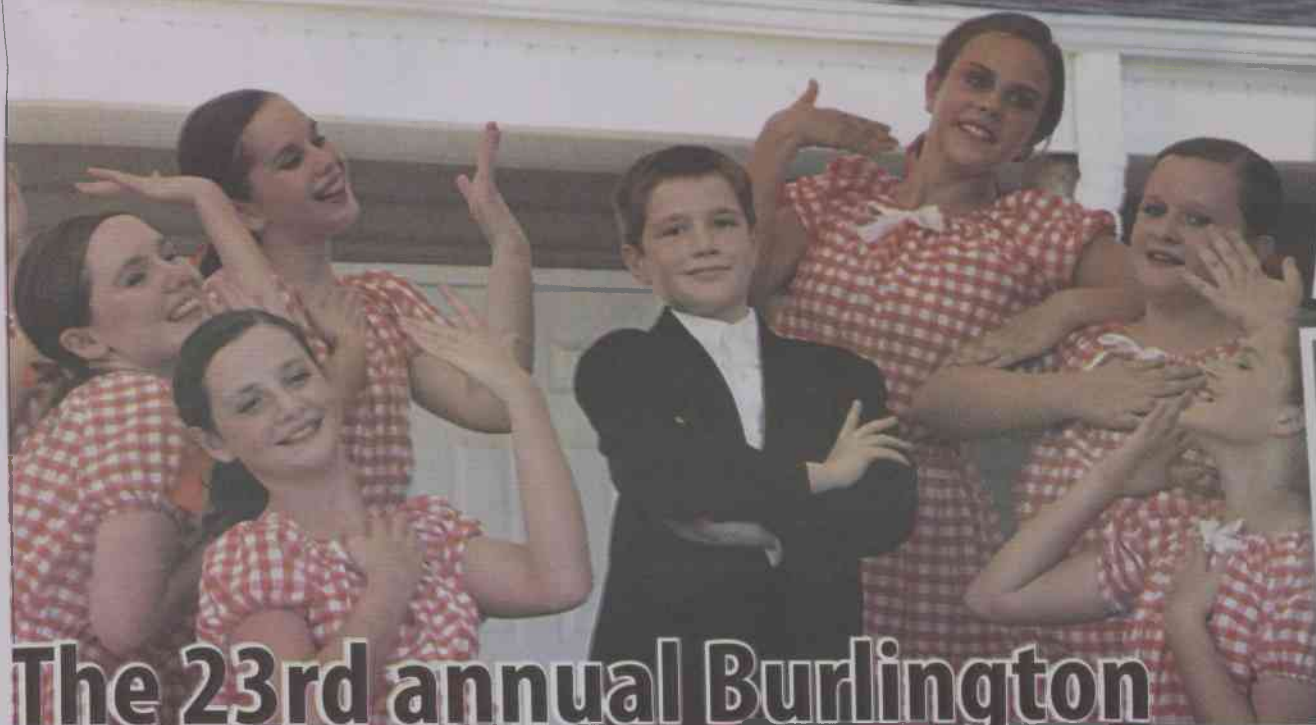


# Style



## The 23rd annual Burlington Carousel Festival

Cat Valero  
Reporter

Over the weekend of Sept. 18-19 in Burlington City Park, locals and visitors from surrounding towns came to celebrate the centennial of the Burlington Carousel. The 23rd annual Burlington Carousel Festival commemorates the acquisition of the carousel and raises funds for its upkeep.

The Dentzel Carousel Company manufactured in Philadelphia around 1910, which was considered the "Golden Age" of carousels.

The carousel's first home was the Locust Point Amusement Park in Oak Harbor, Ohio and then Forest Park Amusement Park in Forest Park, Ohio in the 1920s. The city records state the carousel was bought for \$3,500 and subsequently moved in to Burlington City Park in 1948.

At a going rate of five cents per ticket, "children of all ages" were welcomed to ride the carousel on Oct. 9, 1949, the opening day for the carousel, according to city records. Even though the attraction was unfinished, more than 12,000 people attended the opening day ceremonies of what was called the "merry-go-round" or "hobby horses."

Two generations of area residents enjoyed riding the carousel until the late 1970s when there were some mechanical problems and deterioration of the animals. Extensive renovation went underway between 1981 to 1985, because of the city, the Alamance County Service League and the private donation of local resident Diane Vaught.

Extensive research was undertaken to restore the centenarian carousel's original design. Professional furniture refinishers and local volunteers stripped all the animals and chariots and made necessary repairs. The scenery panels above the mirrors at the top of the carousel were worked on with special care, according to records.

The restoration was completed in 1985 and shortly after, the Carousel Festival began its annual tradition to provide funds for upkeep and maintenance.

This past weekend the festival provided a historical display of the Carousel past and present, craft tents of traveling artists, children theatre workshops, funnel cakes, lemonade and live entertainment including well-known country trio The McClymonts.

Karen Johnson from Greensboro said she's been taking all five of her children to the carousel since they were little. One of her daughters, now 24, accompanied her family to ride the carousel.

"I've been taking my children here for years," said Johnson's mother, Burlington resident Phillis Campbell. "I've lived here for 45 years. My husband worked for Burlington Industries. We know the area quite well."

Besides the carousel children and families can spend time riding the miniature train, planes, cars, or take a boat ride.

The amusement park is open on Saturdays 11 a.m.-9 p.m. and Sundays from 1-7 p.m. during the fall and spring. Each ticket is 75 cents each and 50 cents on Thursdays. Season passes are available.



ALL PHOTOS BY HEATHER CASSANO | Staff Photographer

Far top left: The non-profit dance troupe Karizma performs for the guests at the Burlington Carousel Festival. Karizma is part of the Burlington Academy of Dance and Art.

Top right: A mother takes photos on her phone of her children on the Dentzel Carousel at the Burlington Carousel Festival.

Second from top: Burlington residents ride the 100-year-old Dentzel Carousel.

Third from top: Burlington resident Meredith Sawyer and daughter Grace ride the Dentzel Carousel. Sawyer is an Elon alumna.

Fourth from top: Free rides on the Dentzel Carousel were available to guests of the Burlington Carousel Festival.

Far left: William Henry Dentzel III encourages bidders at the silent auction to bid on carousel pieces made by the Dentzel family.

Top left: Walter Creech, a returning vendor, shows off his painting at the Burlington Carousel Festival. Creech has been vending the festival for around 10 years.

Bottom left: Elon sophomore Anna McCracken buys kettle corn from a vendor at the Burlington Carousel Festival.

