

There's something about a fair that draws us there

By ELIZABETH STEWART

There's something about a Fair that brings out the child in us.

For Kings Mountain area people, the Bethware Community Fair and the Cleveland County Fair are favorite haunts during Fair Season.

Bethware Progressive Club organized the Bethware Fair in 1948. A handful of men got together in 1947 and decided to help out the football team by throwing an agricultural fair that has become a tra-

dition now for 63 years.

Handwritten notes from the organizational meeting May 19, 1947 reported that "directors of the Progressive Club met in the High School building. J.B. Brown made the motion that the club sponsor a carnival fair." (At the time Bethware School housed grades 1-12.)

The club talked about sponsoring a beauty contest, an ugly man contest, and cake walk. Admission was 10 cents for women and children. Men paid by their waist

measurement.

"Kids couldn't keep their eyes off the school ground when the Fair rolled in at Bethware," said long-time and now retired Bethware Progressive Club member/officer Fred Tate.

"You know we used to set up during school hours because the Fair was held for a number of years in August and school was in session."

In the beginning, Bethware Fair was mostly agriculture. Exhibits

every year feature some of the good, home-grown products from gardens and farms in the community.

The sponsoring club always gives the proceeds from the Fair to the schools, setting up a scholarship and naming a Fair Queen. This year over \$2,000 was awarded in prizes and there were many blue (first place) ribbons among the entries.

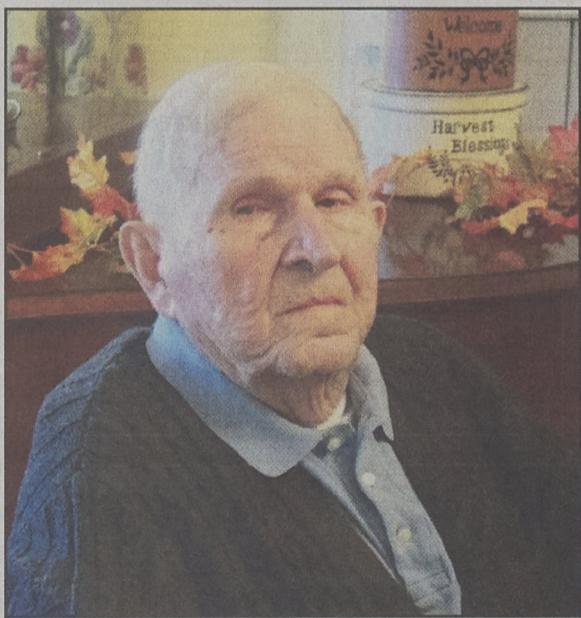
A petting zoo, live entertainment, midway rides and the tradi-

tional cotton candy, roasted corn, hot dogs and hamburgers and all the fixings are among the sights and sounds of the event that people love and remember.

"Who can forget the many contributions that men and women of the Greater Bethware community and our fair-goers and advertisers in our premium book make to the fair's success," says current Progressive Club president Mitch McKinney. The list is long.

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