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Adam Jones Emerald

To escape from the heat, take a stroll around the exhibits pavilion and see novelties galore.

## Use creativity to have fun, be frugal at county fair

The economy is down, the heat is up, but the fair is still rolling along.

With an admission price of up to \$8 a day or \$14 for a season pass, the fair is definitely a place where it's easy to spend money.

In addition to admission, factor in the cost of food. Assuming a fairgoer spends a good part of Saturday at the fair, starting at 10 a.m., then eating lunch at noon — that's \$5.50 for teriyaki chicken and rice and \$2 for strawberry lemonade.

Then comes a snack attack at 2 p.m. One beer is \$4 and a caramel apple is \$2.50.

During the remainder of time not spent standing in line for these delicious sundries, a person may want to actually ride some of the midway attractions.

That's probably about 20 tickets, which cost \$13.

The grand total for the day for one person? \$35. Yowzers.

But I contend that it is possible to have fun at the fair by merely paying the entrance fee. The fair offers all kinds of attractions, shows, contests and entertainment to the frugal fairgoer.

Start out in the Expo Center. With booths offering information

about everything from new boats to hardwood floors, all interests seem to be addressed.

One fun demonstration to watch is "Sweeps." The company representative will dump everything from crushed chips to hair (yuck) onto the carpet or floor and proceed to magically sweep it off with this domestic marvel of 20 years. This is a fun demo to watch merely because the name of the product doesn't end with "2000."

While there are countless booths in the Expo Center that are trying to sell something, some of them actually have prize drawings. All you have to do is give them your most vital, secret information.

"Petra Fashions" is giving away a three-day, two-night vacation, while "All Natural Pest Elimination" is giving away a free extermination. "Pampered Chef," Mary Kay Cosmetics and The Register-Guard are also giving away prizes.

In addition to the booths that offer free drawings for prizes, there are some that are purely informational. Not everyone is giving something away.

"We're selling raffle tickets. They cost \$10,000 and your chances are pretty good," Staff Jennings Boating Center salesman Nick Carter said.

Now, move a little to the left and enter the world that is the Craft Center. Everything from quilts to cakes are on display for the interested public.

Some of my favorites to view are the spectacular quilts and the "adult candy," which, strange as it may seem, doesn't appear very

"adult." The piece of art voted "most likely to be stolen," is the dollar bill Origami, which features many dollar bills arranged in creative shapes.

Every evening of the fair from 7:30 to 9:30, a crafty group of dancers will square dance their way into the hearts of the public. The shows are free and are sure to please anyone who enjoys watching people dance with skill and style while someone yells "calls" to them.

And now, for the easy free stuff. Just walking around the fairgrounds is definitely a fun and interesting way to beat the expense of the Lane County Fair. If you really must feel like a part of the action, simply find a ride and watch.

I recommend the "Mardi Gras." Although people can't be seen enjoying the ride, the decorations of the building are very entertaining: There's a devil, a maid, a man in a chicken suit and a sun that looks like it's up to some serious voodoo.

Then, take a jaunt over to the "Slingshot." Just looking at the prices for this ride should be entertainment enough. But it is still fun to pretend you're in the ball that appears to be performing an upside-down bungee jump.

Overall, the fair doesn't have to drain your wallet. It can be a grand experience without spending a fortune. And hey, you could win something from the Expo Center!

Contact the managing editor at jennischultz@dailyemerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

## Fair

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spray misters at the tent — a refreshing alternative to those who didn't want stiff breezes rushing by them at the cost of upchucking (i.e. the "El Nino.")

For the most part, though, the exhibition halls are where people tend to frequent. Probable because air conditioning was king.

Inside the main convention center, there are wine tasting booths (hic!), photography exhibitions and art exhibits. There are also the more general merchandise booths. Salesmen pitch a bunch of "in-

formercial-worthy" products such as the "Miracle Blade," while wearing totally unnecessary headset mikes. Ben and Jerry's and another ice cream vendor do a brisk business — naturally.

Finally, what would a county fair be without the obligatory livestock and agricultural exhibits? To a city boy like me, there are only two varieties of pig: pork and bacon. So it was an interesting experience to get to see these animals up close and personal.

It's amazing to see the variety of livestock. For instance, there are some Aracuana chickens, which apparently lay very "Seussian" green

eggs (for the ham, yer on yer own).

There is also a tiny Mexican variety of cucumber, which literally grows only as big as one's thumb — talk about handy! It's even more amazing to realize that some of the veggies and livestock were grown by young kids.

The Lane County Fair is impressive. It's everything I'd heard a fair was supposed to be like. From the sound of the carnival music to the smell of the livestock and the taste of fresh corn on the cob, it was a little like going to another time.

Pat Payne is a freelance columnist for the Emerald. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.



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