

An old-fashioned festival with a cherry on top

Cove Cherry Fair has something for everyone

By John Vollinger
Go! Magazine

COVE — The annual Cove Cherry Fair is returning on Saturday, Aug. 21, at the Ascension Conference Center. This is a family-friendly, all-day event, free to all.

The Cherry Fair has a storied history in Cove, originating in 1911, with Cove's community members gathering in their excitement to share their bountiful fruit harvests with surrounding communities, and the rest of the

country as well. With a "Royal Court" of youths from the community, as well as parades, music, and poetry readings, the fair was a festive time for the entire region for eight years. The annual event then went into an 80-plus-year hiatus until 2000, when Cove recommenced holding the joyous occasion.

The event kicks off with a pair of Fun Run/Walk Races, with a length of either 1 mile or 3 miles (registration is at 7 a.m.), with pricing varying on the length of the race you select, and whether you decide to register alone or with your family; medals are up for grabs, and proceeds go to support the fair and the Union/Cove Boston/Philly trip.



The Observer/File
Children compete in a cherry-pie-eating contest at Cove's Cherry Fair in August 2016.

There will also be some other cherry-themed contests offered, including a cherry-pit spitting contest, and two types of pie-eating contests: one dubbed "polite" while the other is hands-free. There will additionally be many activities for kids, such as taking a ride on the Hog Wild Days Piggy Train, jumping in the bouncy house and investigating mounds of bubbles (supplied by the fire department).

Also quite notable are the quilt show and raffle (on display in Ascension's Coe-Kerr Community Center), the sourdough pancake breakfast (7-11 a.m. in Founder's Hall; \$8, \$3 age 5-11, younger than

5 eat for free) and the community parade, with all kinds of small-town, family-friendly floats welcome. As an addendum, the parade — as well as the entire event — is advertised as 100% politics-free, with the focus being solely on the unity of the community.

The cherries on top will be the live music throughout the day from the likes of Elwood, Jezebel's Mother and The Wasteland Kings, as well as the myriad vendors selling their goods and/or services. Expect to hear combinations of folk, soul, blues and Americana as the day rolls on, and enough vendors of such various wares and food to make your head spin.

In the evening, the Cove Drive-In across the street hosts a ring-toss tournament, karaoke and live local music.

Whether you are looking for some handmade jewelry or art, curious to learn about tending your own cherry tree in Cove, or even want an introduction to the members of the Cove City Council, the fair will have something you will enjoy.

The event is completely volunteer-oriented, and extra hands are always welcome. If you would like to sign up to help out, register a parade float, or want some more information on the event, visit www.covecherryfair.com.

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