



Hamilton Primary School Festival Will Feature Paranormal Investigators, Bake-Off, And More

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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OTTERVILLE - The 39th annual Hamilton Primary School Festival will be held on Saturday, Sept. 24 from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 25 from noon to 4 p.m. on the grounds of the Hamilton Primary School, located at 107 E. Main St. in Otterville.

The festival will feature everything from paranormal investigators to live entertainment, food, tours of the historic Hamilton Primary school, and more; proceeds from the event go towards the restoration of the historic school building.

This year, the “Just Say Boo” Paranormal Group will have an information booth set up in the school on Saturday, and will host a paranormal investigation of the school that evening.

“In past years, we have had a lot of paranormal groups who have come and visited our school,” Festival Chairperson Mary Drainer said. “Just Say Boo has graciously offered to come to the festival on Saturday the 24th and set up a booth in the upper level of the school to tell more about their group and answer questions. They will also have an investigation later that evening at the school.”

The 22nd annual bake-off and auction will be held on Saturday at 1 p.m., which will see competition amongst four categories of baked goods: cakes, pies, cookies, and bread /pastries. There will be three cash prizes of \$25, \$15, and \$10 awarded to the top three participants in each category.

To enter the bake-off, Drainer said you must prepare one item and bring it to the school basement by noon on Saturday for judging. Winners will be announced at 1 p.m. and all entries will be auctioned off, with the proceeds going toward the restoration of the school.

This year's festival will see the return of watermelon-eating and seed-spitting contests on Saturday at 3 p.m. and Sunday at 3:30 p.m. Drainer said these competitions were especially popular before the pandemic, and they saw it fit to bring them back this year.

There will also be children's games at the event, including ring toss, duck pond, milk bottles, and more. Drainer said there will also be children's coloring competitions held inside the school on both days, and prizes will be awarded.

This year's event will also showcase a variety of crafts and vendors, including locally grown honey, paintings, painting kits, fall and Halloween decorations, Scentsy, jewelry keychains, and much more. Live entertainment will be provided by DJ Trevor Brown on Saturday at 2:30 p.m. and by Joe Powell on Sunday from 1-3:30 p.m.

Lots of food and drinks will be available, including fish sandwiches, pulled pork BBQ, cheeseburgers, bratwursts, hot dogs, potato salad, chips homemade desserts, soda, water, and coffee.

Drainer said there will also be a few different raffles held, including the 75 Prize Raffle and 50/50 drawings.

"Our 75 Prize Raffle consists of many cash prizes, ranging from the first prize of \$149.00 - that is how many years old the school that stands today," Drainer said. "We usually have 25-30 basket raffle donations and have a wide variety of items. We also have a 50/50 drawing every day, depending on the crowd we have."

Local historian Jean Marshall will be on-site to give free tours of the historic school building on both days of the festival. A church service hosted by Otterville Baptist Church will also be held on Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Drainer said the proceeds from this event will help fund the restoration of the historic Hamilton Primary School building - she said they've completed some work on the school in years past, but some of that work will have to be re-done in addition to new work. Here's some of what they've accomplished so far:

- Tuckpointed the outside of the entire building
- Repaired, waterproofed, and painted the roof

- Updated the plumbing and installed a bathroom and kitchen sink
- Installed a furnace
- Repaired and painted all the windows on the outside and trim in 2005
- Updated the electricity in the basement and the first floor.
- In 2020, installed a waterproofing system in the basement for a cost of \$15,000.

“As you can see, we have done a lot of things, but there so many more things left to do. The top floor has not been touched as of yet,” Drainer said. “Our immediate project is to have the outside windows repainted, and in the next year or so, the roof will have to be painted again which is on a 10-year schedule.

“It is my hope that people will take the time to come and see this beautiful school and what it stands for. It's a piece of history that we cannot let be forgotten.”

For more information about this year's Hamilton Primary School Festival, call or text (618) 971-8509 or (618) 535-0342.