

Burlington Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival

A Celebration of History and Heart

Written by: **Vicki Ginn**

The delicious aroma of simmering apples and spices mingles with the scent of wood smoke to tinge the air. Follow your nose and the tendrils of wood smoke down the country lane and you will find dozens of men and women clustered around large, bubbling copper kettles. Here you see them making Burlington's Famous Apple Butter for the festival.

The apple butter production takes place outdoors in the time honored and time consuming manner handed down through the generations. While many other festivals begin their apple butter making with an applesauce base, the Burlington festival continues to produce apple butter the old-fashioned way. Fresh West Virginia apples are added to shiny copper kettles before daybreak each day. The volunteers, rhythmically stir the kettles throughout the morning and long into the afternoon.

The festival, which began as a fundraising event for the Burlington Family Services' Children's Home Campus, is now one of the largest events of its kind in West Virginia. Festival proceeds benefit the ministries of Burlington United Methodist Family Services. From its beginnings in 1913 as the Star of Hope Child Refuge, Burlington has continued to serve children and families in need. Today the organization serves children in residential care at two campuses—one in Burlington and one in Beckley, WV and provides care for nearly 150 other children in foster homes throughout the state; and provides adoption services and a variety of family based services from locations in Burlington, Keyser, Beckley, Grafton, Fairmont, Morgantown, Elkins and Charleston, WV and in Oakland, MD.



The 33rd annual Burlington Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival will be held Saturday, September 30 and Sunday, October 1, 2006 in the tiny community of Burlington, WV. Weekend activities include the 2nd annual "Bids for Kids" charity auction beginning at 1:00 p.m. The auction features antiques and automobiles, sports memorabilia, gift baskets, furniture, decorative items, etc.—all

donated by businesses and individuals to benefit Burlington Family Services' ministries. To get there from just about anywhere, follow U.S. Route 50 to its intersection with Patterson Creek Road.

The Burlington Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival offers visitors a wonderful weekend of family fun and togetherness. In addition to apple butter, you will find country fair foods, a juried arts and crafts show, an open-air flea market, handmade and antique gifts, furniture, pottery, clothing, toys and more. The fiddle contest on Sunday is among the area's finest, and features adult and senior bluegrass musicians from a five state region. Youthful fiddle, banjo and mandolin players compete on Saturday. The festival offers continuous on-stage entertainment featuring bluegrass and gospel performers, kiddy rides and family oriented festivities. Admission to the festival grounds is free of charge, with parking and shuttle bus service available nearby.

Festival grounds open at 10:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 pm. For additional information on the festival or the Bids for Kids auction, contact P.O. Box 69, Burlington, WV 26710; by phone at (304) 788-1953 or visit our website at www.bumfs.org.

