Black House holds fish fry

Lisa Hobbs photos

Black House board member Steve Grayson works hard to keep everyone supplied with fried fish.

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Nothing brings people together like an outdoor fish fry. There's just something about cooking and eating outside that most people enjoy. Yes, it can be hot. You can be pestered by bugs and insects, but a cookout provides an ambiance that can't be experienced in any other way.

The Black House opened its doors and grounds to guests recently for a Bazaar and Fish Fry, with organizers touting the huge pieces of delicious white fish. Visitors were also able to tour the historic home, which was built in 1825 and is the oldest remaining residence in McMinnville.

Black House executive director Jeanette Lowery conveyed appreciation for the dedication of the board, and the community volunteers who helped make the day a success.

Along with fried fish, the dinner included slaw and hush puppies. The fryer was manned by board member Steve Grayson, while Earline Steakley, who is also a board member, was on hush puppy patrol using her mother's recipe.

"We really enjoy offering this event," said Steakley. "This is the second year, and it has been well received by the public. We could not have fried the fish or the hush puppies any faster, and it was certainly fresh when we served it."

Addie Fults, one of the best cooks in the county, offered a variety of delicious desserts for the bazaar, selling cakes, both whole and per slice, as well as cookies.

"I had a whole table full of desserts," said Fults. "They sold out quickly. Baking is one of the things I enjoy doing."

Tours of the historic home were given by board member David Moore and other volunteers, including a group of local 4-H'ers.

"I am a board member, and have been since I retired from Kroger 10 years ago in 2008," said Moore. "There's a lot of history here, and we enjoy sharing it with people as they tour the property."

Steakley took the opportunity to add some summer décor to the historic dining room, setting the table with a patriotic theme. She utilized a white vintage Christmas tree, filling it with American flags.

According to records, The Black House was built by Jesse Coffee and was unique in the fact that it was brick, with the original grounds situated on 13 acres. The property was acquired by the Thomas Black family in 1874, providing the home its most lasting name.

The house was deeded to the Eagle Club in the 1980s, and under the guidance of Lowery has been restored for future generations to enjoy. Funds netted from the event will go toward the upkeep of the property.

Harry and Pam Felty stopped by the bazaar for a fun picnic, with Harry proclaiming the fish was delicious.

Addie Fults offers one of her delicious homemade coconut cakes to bazaar visitors.

Relaxing after a delicious meal of fried fish at the Black House gazebo are, from left, Peggy Moore, Ricky Lee, Rhonda Lee and Donna Evans.

Manning a deep fryer can be a hot and tedious job, but Earline Steakley makes it look easy as she dips out a fresh batch of hush puppies.

A historic wood cook stove stands in the kitchen of the Black House. Board member David Moore served as a tour guide, providing information about the home and grounds.

Spencer Stubblefield can't wait to dig into his purchase of pork rinds. They were provided by Hog Wild Pork Rinds, and could be purchased in regular or barbecue flavors.