

Staff photos by Stanley Brick

Two-year-old Lydia Miller of Mount Holly drinks a blueberry smoothie at the annual Whitesbog Blueberry Festival.

Festival, crowds exalt blueberries

By DONNA McARDLE

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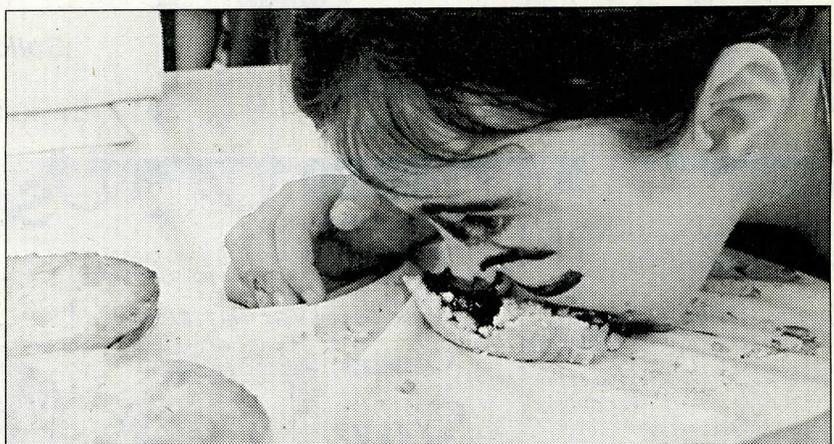
PEMBERTON TOWNSHIP — It was perfect weather yesterday for the 19th annual Whitesbog Blueberry Festival.

With temperatures cooling after the heat wave earlier in week, fair visitors could stroll comfortably through the historic village and adjacent cranberry bogs. The fog tent set up for heat relief was left for youngsters happy to play in the cool mist spraying from above.

"This is fun," said 4-year-old Dave Smith, who was hopping up and down in the fog tent. The Whiting youngster and his dad Shawn were having a great time at the festival.

Visitors to this year's fair were treated to a new addition to the village, which the Whitesbog Preservation Trust has been refurbishing over the years. The newly redone general store was open and doing brisk business, complementing the already renovated workers' cottages and other outbuildings in the company town that drew hundreds of migrant workers during the harvest seasons early in the 20th century.

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"We are having a very good day here," said volunteer and board trustee Dawn Robertson. "This is turning into a super fair. The weather is co-operating, and the crowds have been excellent."

The nearby baked goods table also was thronged with shoppers. Volunteer Jim Bennett was busy packing blueberry muffins and pies, his pockets stuffed with cash.

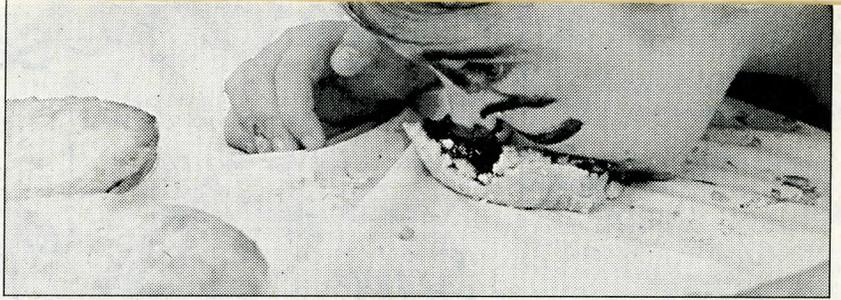
"I've been so busy today, I haven't had time for lunch yet," he said.

Ursula Kryger of Dover and Edward Kata of Fair Lawn made sure they paid Bennett to tuck a pie on the side for them to pick up later.

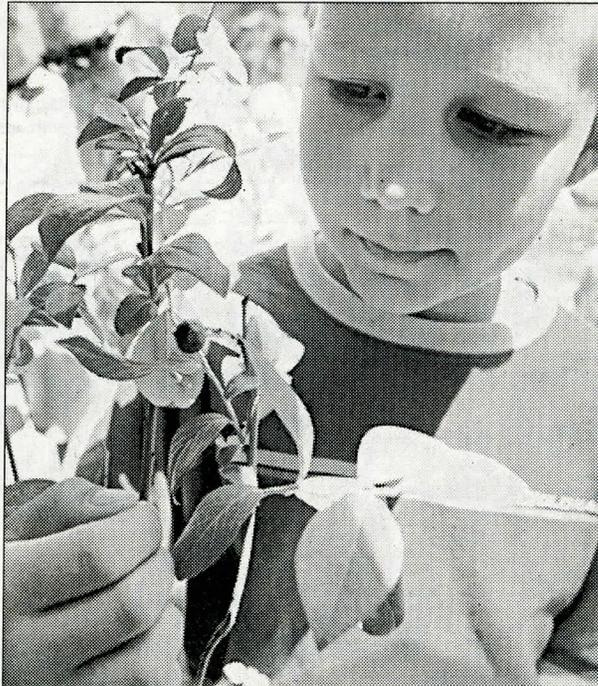
"We have to have our blueberry pie," said Kryger. "It's the best part of the festival."

Under the tents in the entertainment area, Los Karbley of Willingboro was enjoying listening to show emcee Dave Orleans singing before the band Home Cookin' took the stage.

Also enjoying the music was 2½-year-old Finlay Buchanan-Jacobs of Mount Laurel, who was busy finger-painting with a little help from dad



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Jeff Buchanan. Mom Linda Jacobs was relaxing on the grass with Finlay's twin brother Stirling, who was much more interested in the music.

Vendors were busy selling paintings, pottery, candles and woodworking. Barnegat artists Laura and Bob Jankowski said sales were good for their glass art designs, featuring collectible recreations of the World Trade Center.

Other visitors took advantage of

wagon hay rides and guided walks through the bogs.

"This is a really good time," said Shannon Day of Bricktown, who was watching her daughters Madison and Sydney fastidiously painting away. "They'll be there for quite some time today."

Hammonton, located about 30 miles south of Whitesbog, will hold its Red, White and Blueberry Festival today.