

Bingo calls to student interests

Shannan Anderson
Index Staff

For most of the people in the room, this game is serious business.

Almost no one speaks in the large smoke-filled hall as the announcer at the front calls out random numbers. At the sound of his voice, the room comes alive as people frantically search their cards to mark the number. A few numbers later, someone rips a sheet off the pad, holds it high in the air and yells "Bingo!"

Cursing and frustrated, the rest of the room discards that sheet and moves on to the next one, hoping to be the new winner.

The Moose Lodge hosts bingo every Friday night. On any given night, 60 to 70 people fill the hall. Most of them are residents of the surrounding areas, but some of them are Truman students.

Junior Nina Lane has attended four times. She said a friend took a group of people with her, and she just started going after that. Lane said she recruits people now, too.

"It's a good Friday night kind of thing," Lane said. "I'm really competitive, so getting really close to having one left, getting really close to winning, it really is exciting."

But Lane does not just play bingo. She brings the experience home with her.

"[My roommate and I] saved all our bingo sheets and put them up as a border around our room," Lane said.

Although bingo can be expensive, Lane saves money by only buying one or two packs of cards. At the Moose Lodge, players have the option of buying up to five different kinds of games and as many cards within each game as they want.

Early bingo starts first, followed by regular bingo, special bingo and the night owl. Regular games are worth \$50 to the winner, and specials are worth more, depending on the number of players. The Moose Lodge also offers the progressive game, which currently sits at a jackpot of \$11.50. As soon as someone wins it, it will drop back to \$600 and continue to climb until won again.

Kirkville resident Angie Rouse has never won the progressive game and plays bingo four to five times a week.

"I'm a gambler," Rouse said. "I play here, the VFW, Green Castle and Novinger."

Despite paying to play at a variety

of different places, Rouse said she wins about 80 percent of the time. The costs usually even out, she said.

And she is not the only one making the bingo rounds. Many people at the Moose Lodge on Friday evenings do not make the lodge their only bingo stop. Kirkville resident Brian Tennis also plays at many of the same places.

"I have not been winning lately," Tennis said. "I come because I have an addictive nature."

Jeff Darnell, governor of the lodge, said he knows about the addictive nature of the game.

"We've had bingo here for about 20 years," Darnell said. "We see a lot of the same people here every week."

The people have become a small community traveling from bingo hall to bingo hall every night to indulge in a little bit of gambling. Attendance varies at the lodge from week to week, but it always is fun, Darnell said.

The Moose Lodge is a non-profit organization, and everyone who works during bingo is a volunteer. To set up a bingo hall, Darnell said the lodge had to be approved by the state.

"There's about a 3-inch thick set of rules," Darnell said. "We had to send in an application and fill out a bunch of forms."

But it seems to have all been worth it. The turnout is great, and the crowd is an enjoyable mix of serious competitors and easygoing fun seekers. The game is open to anyone older than 16.

Yet not everyone enjoys it as much as others do. Freshman Giles Smyser has only played once and said he thinks the game is OK. He hasn't won yet but said he does not think it would be that much more fun if he had won.

"It's kind of sad just because all those people are really into it," Smyser said. "They're all really competitive about it and take it really seriously. It wasn't a bad atmosphere, just not really pleasant, because it's pretty smoky."

Smyser said he does not think it is as fun as other stuff he could be doing. Yet people keep going, and Smyser said he agrees that aspects of it are enjoyable.

"It's not completely not fun," he said. "I would probably go again."

Lane said other pastimes don't offer a chance for a payoff.

"It's really fun," she said. "I would say this is probably better than going to a movie because there's a chance you could get something out of it. ... There's a chance you could win \$30 or \$60."



Shannan Anderson/Index

Junior Brett Young uses her dabber to stamp out numbers during Friday Night Bingo at the Moose Lodge.

Friday Night Bingo

The Moose Lodge is on Illinois Avenue,
across from Leisure World.
Early bird bingo begins at 6:45 p.m.

Photo by Kyle Hill
Design by Lindsay Koski

Bill and Ruth Younger; Operators

Serving

Breakfast 6am - 11am daily
Lunch
Dinner Entrees 4:30pm - 9:00pm daily

Call for dinner reservations
660-332-7337

1155 N. Brown Street * La Plata, MO 63549
phone: 660-332-7337 * fax: 660-332-7337

WINDFALL BOOK RELEASE

See your friends perform their poetry, music or prose

Sunday April 30th
7:00 p.m.
SUB Down Under

Get your free copy of the 2006 Windfall!

Keeping the "Assist" in Pharmacist

- Drive-up window
- Free campus delivery
- Close to campus
- 4 pharmacists to serve you!
- Complete prescription service

Most Insurance Cards Welcome!
www.riderdrug.com

Baltimore at Patterson, Kirkville, Mo.
660-665-4666

Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.