

A taste of home

Moon Festival showcases traditional Chinese culture



Krista Goodman/Index

Students perform at the Moon Festival Saturday night in the Student Union Building. The Society for Sino-American Studies sponsored the event, which included traditional Chinese food, dress and music.

BY CHARUNDI PANAGODA
Staff Reporter

Red Chinese lanterns lit the SUB Down Under Saturday night as guests gathered for the Moon Festival sponsored by the Society for Sino-American Students.

The Moon Festival, also known as the Mid-Autumn festival, is an important traditional festival celebrated in China and other East Asian countries. It falls on the fifteenth day of the eighth month in the Chinese calendar, which is around September-October in the Western calendar.

"It's like an Asian Thanksgiving," President of the SSAS Wilson Zhang said. "It celebrates the harvest, family reunion. This day people get together, appreciate the moon [by] eating the mooncakes. Right now, moon is

the roundest of the year."

Most Truman students celebrating the Moon Festival are away from home and unable to admire the bright harvest moon with their family members, as is traditionally done. However, celebrating the festival with the Truman community didn't make the occasion any less important.

"When the kids are far away from home, you have this festival to have their friends come and celebrate together," said Julie Minn, adviser for SSAS and professor of Chinese language. "We really appreciate it to bring the happiness together and make everybody know that Truman is their home."

Wenyi Zhang, a junior Business major from China, came to the Moon Festival dressed in a qipao, a traditional Chinese dress. She said this was an important day for her.

"This is a time I remember my home. Even though we are far apart, we feel appreciated by this moon."

Wenyi Zhang
junior

"This is a time I remember my home," she said. "Even though we are far apart, we feel appreciated by this moon."

The SSAS commemorated the occasion with performances emphasizing East-

Asian culture. The stage was decorated with a painting of Chang'e, the Moon goddess of immortality, to whom the moon festival is dedicated.

Festivities opened with the "Waistdrum dance," a popular Northern Chinese drum dance. The Moon Festival is a time for lovers as well as families. The romantic spirit of the occasion was brought about by the wistful songs "SuZhou River," "Dan Yuan Ren Chang Jiu (May we last forever)," a song version of the well-known Chinese love story "Liang Zhu (Butterfly Lovers)" and a flute and violin duet of classical Chinese music.

The ancient Chinese legend behind the festival was honored in a dramatic rendition of "The Moon Festival Skit."

The guests were served

free mooncakes, a central component of the Moon Festival. Sometimes, the Moon Festival is even referred to as the "Mooncake Festival."

Basically, mooncakes are a kind of Chinese dessert, and we eat them during the autumn festival," senior Pengcheng Wang said, who was serving food to the guests. "And we had here three different kinds, and they had three different kinds of fillings — red bean, mung bean and lotus seed. Some of the ones we have are square and some are round. Traditionally, the Chinese ones are round and Vietnamese have square ones. But we have both kinds here."

Guests also had the

chance to purchase Chinese good luck charms, bracelets and necklaces from Shanghai Expo. The SSAS will donate a part of their proceeds to Operation Smile, a non-profit organization providing corrective surgery for children with cleft palates.

The Moon Festival was not just for Asian students or students in the SSAS. Many local and non-Asian international students also attended. It was an opportunity for all attendees to learn about a new culture.

"I think it's very interesting," Freshman Stephanie Lepper said. "I wasn't really sure what it was. My suitemate told me about it, and I figured I'd come and see what it was. I really like the decorations. They are cool. The music playing is awesome."



Local band's popularity rises

B J Allen and Blue Voodoo scheduled to play October blues festival

BY BURGUNDY RAMSEY
Staff Reporter

Some people are born knowing what they want to do in life. This is the case for nearly all the members of B J Allen and Blue Voodoo.

Music always has been a significant part in their lives, they said. Most of the members have been playing or singing longer than they've been doing anything else. Whether it was playing in high school bands, like guitarist Jerry Fuller, or singing along with his father's band while washing dishes, like lead vocalist B J Allen, music was, and is, vital to them. They wouldn't have it any other way, especially when

it comes to the blues.

The Kirksville band's love of blues carries through their work. Fuller and lead bass player J.P. Hurd write all their music.

"I like to try to, if I can, incorporate jazzy kind of ideas into the blues stuff," Fuller said.

Allen, drummer Derek Daniels and percussionist David Daniels make up the rest of the band. The band started playing together in 2003 and has released three albums of original material, with the most recent, "Heartless," released in 2009. Their albums have gone on to be played worldwide.

"Sirius XM satellite radio has a blues station, and they've put us in their top-15 countdown," Allen said. "We made it up to No. 8. That was our biggest feather in our cap so far. It's like, 'Holy cow — we're in a countdown somewhere.'"

They also have had the opportunity to play at venues all over the country including Memphis, Tenn., at the International Blues Challenge.

The band will play at the Roots 'N Blues 'N BBQ Festival on Oct. 2 in Columbia, Mo.

"If the band just goes and does what it does every time, then I'll be happy," Hurd said. "And that's what we try to do, we try to give it 150 percent, whether there [are] two people there or 1,000, you just do what you do. And hopefully everyone's in gear and it comes out well."

The road to Roots 'N Blues wasn't an easy one. Blue Voodoo had to compete with several other bands in a regional competition in Columbia. After winning this competition, they had to compete against winners from three other regional competitions for the King of Roots title.



Photo Courtesy of B J Allen and Blue Voodoo

From left, guitarist Jerry Fuller, lead bass player J.P. Hurd, lead vocalist B J Allen and percussionist David Daniels.

"All the other acts in the competition were awesome," Allen said. "As far as I'm concerned, any one of them could have won it. We were just lucky and kind of shocked."

After they play in Columbia, the band will take some time off from performing to start working on their next album, which they hope to release next spring. They also are starting to book performances for their 2011 season.

"We're just out there playing the

blues and making some noise," Allen said. "It keeps [us] out of trouble. We're just great, big grown-up kids. If we weren't doing this, what would we be doing?"

The Roots 'N Blues 'N BBQ Festival will be Oct. 1-2 downtown Columbia. B J Allen and Blue Voodoo will play Oct. 2 at 11 a.m. on the MPIX stage at the corner of Seventh Street and Locust Street. To learn more about the band or to hear some of their music, go to www.BlueVoodooBlues.com.

'Truman Experience' remains undefined

BY SHAWN SHINNEMAN
Staff Reporter

Administrators preach it, if it is something that can be preached. Students achieve it, if it is something that can be achieved.

It is often uttered, yet rarely defined.

The "Truman Experience" — what does it really mean?

"For me, the first person I heard say it was Dr. Krueger, but he might have gotten it from someplace else," President Troy Paino said. "I don't know."

The origin of the phrase is not easy to pinpoint, but it is not unique. The University of Missouri-Columbia's website boasts the "Mizzou Student Experience." Missouri State University's website provides a guide to the "Missouri State Experience."

"Truman Experience" might be too concise, too pithy," Paino said. "Because you could connect experience to just about any school right? What's the [University of] Missouri experience? What's the St. Louis University Experience? So, it really means nothing. You really have to ... ask people, 'Okay, well what do you mean by that?'"

The answer around campus varies.

Sophomore Nicholas Gross said much of the reason he came to Truman was because his brother was already here, but he's grown to think this is the right school for him.

"I kind of think that the 'Truman Experience' is the relaxed environment that Truman is," Gross said. "You can talk to your teacher directly about problems you have in class instead of talking to a teacher's aide [like] some of the bigger schools."

Beth Kral, assistant dean of Student Affairs, said something that sticks out to her as an aspect of the "Truman Experience" is it is a community of learners, and that, "it just seems like a place where people are friendly, and we want to take care of each other."

"If we're saying, 'Come be a part of the 'Truman Experience,'" we're saying, 'Come be a part of something that we think is special,'" Kral said. "So I do think there is probably something about that that people respond to."

Paino outlined three points he felt comprised the "Truman Experience" — the same points he made during his installation speech — that he said encapsulate the "Truman Experience." Receiving an education within the supportive Truman and Kirksville communities, receiving a liberal arts and sciences education that breeds free-thinkers and leaders and a concept that Paino calls "opportunity and excellence in equal balance," make up the "Truman Experience."

"[It's] the belief that access is really a hollow concept if it is not balanced with high expectations and a commitment to excellence," he said.

Paino said he tries to steer clear of using the phrase "Truman Experience" when he is talking to people outside the University, because it is not something that can be easily understood externally.

Freshman Johanna Typaldos said she heard the term often before get-

"I think what's great about this experience is that it's defined by the person, it's not defined by the institution."

Matthew Derezinski
assistant professor of art

The Truman Experience, *n.*
[troo-muhn] [ik-speer-ee-uhns]

1. The Truman Experience is the combination of factors that will make you feel like Truman is a place you can call home. It is about making friends, living independently, and exploring the world around you. This is why we have created an environment that encourages student activity and interaction.

*According to the Truman website

ting to campus, but even now she has trouble grasping its meaning.

"It kind of sounds like they're talking about college experience, but with Truman," she said. "So Truman is supposed to be different than other colleges. I don't know the difference, because I've only ever been here."

With so many definitions floating around, Matthew Derezinski, assistant professor of art, suggested it might be impossible to come up with a definition that applies to all.

"I think what's great about this experience is that it's defined by the person, it's not defined by the institution," he said. "We give them these avenues

of possibilities. ... I can't define it, but I think it comes down to the student and what their experience is and what they take away from that."

Derezinski said the art faculty has had conversations at department meetings about what the "Truman Experience" is and how they can enhance it for their students.

There might not be a clear-cut way to define the "Truman Experience," but it hasn't stopped people around campus from trying.

"Sometimes I think it's kind of nice that there isn't [a definition]," Kral said. "People get to define it for themselves."