

Open mic nights showcase talent

BY KATHLEEN BARBOSA
Staff Reporter

Someone whispers "test" into a microphone, the aroma of coffee wafts through the room and a courageous individual stands in front of the crowd, ready to pour out his or her soul to a room of strangers at Kirksville's open mic events.

West Winery at Jackson Stables hosts an open mic night every Friday in October from 6 to 9 p.m. It's open to audience members and participants of all ages.

The open mic night at Jackson Stables has been a venue for musicians for several months. Manager Karen Elam said she has been impressed by the talented

musicians that have performed.

"It just blows me away that in this little, tiny town, what awesome musicians just walk through the door," Elam said.

Willy Newell, host of the Open Mic Nights, is one of the musicians Elam enjoys. Newell's interest in music began 39 years ago when he started sneaking his father's guitar to learn how to play. At the open mic, Newell played his main instrument, the keyboard, as well as a guitar and a melodica, which is a combination of a harmonica and an accordion. He said his favorite thing about Open Mic Nights is meeting the musicians. Along with performing at open mics, Newell performs with various bands, including the Megan Boyer band, which performed at Round Barn Blues, and Blues Hog, a Truman band.

"When you run out of the pool of musicians in a small town, you turn to Truman and you get some fresh, young musicians that are great," Newell said.

Weston Newell, Willy Newell's son, and senior Luke McDuff played jam music alongside Newell at the open mic. Weston performs with his father in the band King Pin.

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Karen Elam
West Winery Manager

McDuff started playing at open mics a year ago and also performs in the band Copasetic. McDuff said he enjoys the live rush, and at open mics he gets to perform different genres of music like country, blues and jazz.

"For me it's like a learning opportunity to get out and play different types of things than I normally would," McDuff said.

Every Saturday, the Washington Street Java Company's mic opens up from 7 to 9 p.m. for a variety of music genres, po-



Krista Goodman/Index
Senior Luke McDuff plays with Ron Whitacre at Jackson Stables' Open Mic Night on Oct. 15. This was Whitacre's first time performing at the event.

etry readings and stand-up comedy. George Arvin approached Java Co with the idea, and they agreed to let him host the event. He has been participating in and running open mics for 25 years. Arvin said he wants to provide people, especially Truman students, with the opportunity to perform.

Arvin picked Java Co for the open mic location, because he wanted to have a place close to campus, so it would be convenient for college students to come

and perform.

"I don't think we in Kirksville have a lot of opportunities to play," Arvin said. "I want to give people that opportunity."

Senior Arthur Harrill is a frequent customer at Java Co and has had the opportunity to observe the performances. Harrill said he thinks the performances enhance the shop's atmosphere.

Arvin said they are encouraging anyone who has talent or a desire to express themselves to come out and

perform. They have a binder full of jokes, short stories and poems from authors including Walt Whitman, Maya Angelou and Shakespeare that anyone can use. Arvin said he encourages performers to bring original music, poetry or jokes with them to perform.

Both venues encourage performers and observers to come and enjoy the spontaneity of live performances.

"You don't know what's going to come through the door," Arvin said.

Students discuss women's issues

16th Annual Women and Gender Studies Conference begins today

BY CHARUNDI PANAGODA
Staff Reporter

For junior Lindsey Booher, presenting at the Women and Gender Studies conference will be an intimate experience. She'll share a personal testimony about her experience with rape.

Booher said that when she was a junior in high school, she was raped by an acquaintance. She never reported or told anyone, afraid of what people might say about her. She said she wished she had. Last spring her sister also was raped by an acquaintance.

After five years, it's too late for Booher to report her own rape. She decided it was time to talk about her experience when she heard Linda Seidel, professor of English and co-coordinator for the WGST conference, talk about the conference in class.

"Especially with writing this paper, I decided to come forward and tell more people about it," Booher said. "It is a call to arms for women to come forward. It's personal and factual. It starts off with kind of my

own account with my experience with rape. Then it goes forth to talk about the consequences of coming out to report rape."

At first, Booher had been scared of what people might say about her when she revealed herself as a victim of sexual assault. She was appalled to see the harassment of her sister, who is in the process of reporting her rape. Her sister's circumstances further encouraged Booher to use the WGST conference as an opportunity to tell her story and address the social stigma associated with rape.

"I've overcome society's expectations and their rules. I'm ready to talk about it."

Lindsey Booher
senior

Her presentation is entitled "A Slave to Society: Silenced by Sex."

"I've overcome society's expectations and their rules," she said. "I'm ready to talk about it."

For senior Rachel Brown, in addition to coordinating this year's WGST conference, she has an opportunity as a presenter to talk about the women who have changed her life. She's never forgotten the day she stumbled upon her mother's Emily Dickinson poetry collection while she was still in elementary school. Dickinson's writing inspired her as a young girl.

"My paper is called 'How Emily Dickinson Changed My Life,'" Brown said. "It is a personal es-

Notable 'Composing Women' presentations

Oct. 28 Violette Hall 1000

3:00
"Why Am I Naked?" by Aaron Fine

4:30
"Selena, A Reflection of the Mexican-American Woman" by Celia Alpuche May

Oct. 29 Violette Hall 1000

10:30
"A Slave to Society: Silenced by Sex" by Lindsey Booher

4:30 Keynote Lecture
"Making Out with Mirrors, Microphones, and Metaphors and Other Lessons in Ethical Sluttery" by Anna Hirsch

Oct. 30 Baldwin Hall 231

10:30
"How Emily Dickinson Changed My Life" by Rachel Brown

12:30
"Under the Table" by Lisa Miller

say. It's about how female writers, characters, teachers that I've had in my life helped compose the person that I am and how they influenced my writing."

Along with personal testimony sessions, the presenters will discuss social, political, biological and historical constructions of women. The overarching theme of the conference is "Composing Women."

"We meant 'Composing Women' to refer to how do women get composed or constructed in a culture," Seidel said. "Gender is, at least to some extent, socially constructed. So how do women get constructed? How do women get composed because of the expectations that they grow up with, many of which they internalize? We thought that

it would be a really broad topic."

There will be approximately 50 presenters, some visiting from other universities including City University of New York, University of Kentucky, Texas State University at San Marcos and William Paterson University in New Jersey. Writer Anna Hirsch, author of "Making Out with Mirrors, Microphones, and Metaphors and Other Lessons in Ethical Sluttery," will visit from California to present the keynote lecture.

"Part of what we really like about this conference is that faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students, Truman alumni, former teachers come together and have a discussion," Seidel said. "We have a Women and Gender studies minor. We have a lot of people

taking Women and Gender studies courses. This conference gives the people who take the courses, teach the courses, have an interest in the topic to come together and talk about them for three days."

Funded by the Department of English and Linguistics and the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies, the WGST conference has grown since it began.

"It's gotten bigger over the years partly because people come back," Seidel said. "Some people come back for the Homecoming. Some people come back for the Women and Gender Studies conference. I think it's pretty cool."

The 16th annual WGST conference will be hosted from today until Saturday.

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