

Camp combines rodeo and religion

Children learn about rodeo and religion at Christian camp

BY EMILY BATTMER

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The connection between bucking broncos and Sunday morning church services might not be readily apparent, but this summer, local children will gather at the Putnam County fairgrounds to both strengthen their religious connection and learn to compete in a variety of rodeo events.

The Chariton Hills chapter of Fellowship of Christian Cowboys is preparing to host its sixth annual Rodeo Bible Camp this summer as a ministry outreach to local children ages 10 to 17. The camp teaches children of all denominations about the Bible through an unlikely activity: rodeo.

Jason Rouse, Chariton Hills chapter FCC president, said it is easy for people to get caught up in petty things and differences of opinion, but the FCC is all about bringing everyone back to working for Christ and reaching out to save children. Rodeo Bible Camp is its biggest event of the year, he said, and it helps drive that focus home.

"This camp has brought so many members of our community from all kinds of different denominations together for one purpose: to lead kids to Christ," he said. "I am just so thankful that so many people are willing to come together and be saved."

The camp is nondenominational and attempts to build relationships between campers and God, Rouse said. Most of the time it's difficult to get so many different churches to be so supportive of a common goal, he said.

Rouse said the camp achieves that purpose, and he has seen campers connect with religion during the course of the four-day program. They learn to accept Jesus and live for Him, Rouse said, and they also learn a lot about respect — how to respect their elders, their Lord, themselves and the animals they work with.

An added benefit of the camp is rodeo — children of all experience levels get hands-on instruction from seasoned rodeo professionals and put their newfound skills to the test on the last day of camp, when family and friends are invited to watch the children put on their own rodeo.

For Rouse, there is nothing better than combining his two passions — his cowboy background and his love for Christianity. He said that oftentimes, people get caught up in the idea that serving and ministering to others has to be a sacrifice, but Rodeo Bible Camp is not that way at all.

"This is an opportunity to take two of the things that are most important in my life and apply them, and I can't imagine any-



Submitted photo

Campers practice roping at the 2011 Rodeo Bible Camp in Unionville, Mo. The nondenominational camp is hosted each year by the Chariton Hills chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Cowboys to teach children ages 10 to 17 about rodeo and the Bible.

thing better," he said. "You can do the things you love and still reach people and grow the Kingdom."

That passion is something that has spread to campers, including Unionville, Mo. resident Angela Neighbors' sons. Neighbors said two of her four children have attended the Rodeo Bible Camp, and while it wasn't their first introduction to religion, it had a tremendous religious impact.

At age 12, Neighbors' oldest son, Allen, wanted to attend the camp because of his love for animals. While he was there, he decided to fully commit to Christianity and was baptized at his church the Sunday following camp, she said. He returned to camp the following year and was awarded the "Most Christ-like" buckle, she said.

Now, Neighbors' son is a 16-year-old sophomore in high school and he is considering going into ministry after he graduates. Neighbors said she feels like his love for the Bible began at

camp, but she said she's not quite sure whether it stemmed from the people he met there, the experience as a whole or his age at the time he attended camp.

Neighbors said she thinks it's great the camp allows children to learn about Christ and also learn to love and respect God's animals. She also was impressed the camp-

ers had chores to do every day, she said.

While her children won't have time to attend camp this year, she said she would recommend it to anyone who is able to go because of the welcoming, nondiscriminatory atmosphere.

"It really brings the community together because it doesn't involve just one church or one particular group of people," she said. "It's a cool thing to watch all these churches get together for one purpose and focus on what they should be focused on."

Camp director Sara Sevits said people already have started signing up for events and she is expecting 80 or more children

at the camp this year. She said people are drawn to the camp because there are professional instructors to teach a wide variety of rodeo events, but the real purpose of the camp is to introduce children to the gospel.

"That's the purpose of the camp, so that's what we hope they take away from it — an increased love of rodeo, but more importantly an increased love of the Bible," she said.

Sevits said many people might see the rodeo as something that doesn't have anything to do with God, but for Christians, God has to do with everything. She said the camp makes the connection that rodeo doesn't have to be about drinking, cussing and staying out all hours of the night. It can be a fun sport in a clean way, she said, and the instructors at the camp make sure to emphasize that and serve as Christian role models.

"They are teaching these kids how to safely and effectively compete in rodeo, but they're also teaching them about life," she said. "They learn how to conduct themselves better in everything they do — not just when they go to church, but in life itself."

Rodeo Bible Camp
June 13-16
Register online at
www.charitonhillsrbc.com

Poetry makes impact

Students use poetry to express themselves and cope with problems

BY DAVID HUTCHINSON

Staff Reporter

Freshman Ka'Ron Adams chooses his words wisely. Captivating metaphors and suspenseful rhetorical ploys are key to ensnaring an audience in his messages — one misplaced syllable and he's lost them forever. To ensure his fundamental belief, that all people are equal, does not fall onto deaf ears, Adams has turned to poetry.

From gathering a better understanding of the world at large to processing the conundrums of one's day, some Truman State students are using poetry to help solve their problems and express emotion.

Adams said he uses poetry as a way to make sense of the world and because people listen to his message without feeling as if they are being talked down to. Adams has not abandoned speeches, but said he now sees poetry as an addition to his rhetorical toolkit.

Adams recently began writing poetry when he was searching for a talent to showcase in the Zeta Zeta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. Jack of Hearts Scholarship Ball. Adams said he knew he had a powerful message to portray to his audience, but he wasn't sure what mode of delivery would be best to get his point across.

"I didn't want to stand up there and deliver a speech; I wanted to put a little more into it and make it entertaining at least," Adams said. "I didn't even realize I was good at writing poetry until then."

After discovering his gift for poetry, Adams turned to the art form again during the March for Social Justice on April 1 hosted by Delta Sigma Theta. The march raised awareness for the death of Trayvon Martin. Adams said his poetry helped him both make sense of the tragedy and to recognize that many people drew conclusions about the case too quickly.

Poetry serves as an emotional outlet for other students as well. Freshman J.D. Gresham began writing poetry when he was about 13 years old after his mother gave him a journal, he said. He began to see himself as part of the "emo" scene, and he decided to use poetry as a way to relieve emotional distress and express himself, he said.

Gresham said he always writes when he's alone because solitude helps him reflect. Many of the poems are never shown to anyone, and they're only useful to help process the feelings of a certain moment, he said. While Gresham said he still thinks poetry is useful as an outlet, his views of poetry have evolved to incorporate nature and pure aesthetic appreciation.

Junior Yosef Rosen writes poetry every day, mostly for himself. Rosen is an English and psychology double major, and said he writes about three or four times more material than he actually presents during class to be critiqued.

"That's part of the selection process," Rosen said. "I have to sift through [the poems] and see what I like and what's worth getting a critique on. But then I go back and I'm constantly critiquing my own work."

Rosen said he decided he wanted writing to be an integral part of his life when he was 12 years old and finished reading the Lord of the Rings. When he was younger, he frequently used his poetry as a way to relieve his angst, though now he said his poetry contains a full array of emotions.

In order to successfully transition to college during Rosen's freshman and sophomore years, he said he turned to poetry, which helped him process his emotions.

Rosen said he understands the appeal of turning to poetry during times of sadness, but said writing poetry to express only one emotion can prevent someone from producing their best work if their goal is to be published.

"Poetry can serve a purpose even if it's just writing for yourself," he said. "There's public and private poetry. If it resonates with you, it's still poetry."

Lovedrug comes to Kirksville

BY DAN WARNER

Staff Reporter

Kirksville venues do not often attract big-name bands outside of Truman State, but tomorrow night, a group touring the U.S. will make a splash at the Aquadome.

Lovedrug has opened for acts ranging from The Killers to Robert Plant since they formed during 2001. The alternative rock group is from Canton, Ohio, and has had music videos play in regular rotation on MTV. Lovedrug released their fourth full-length album, "Wild Blood," last month.

Band publicist Brandon Chamberlain said the band's current tour will end May 19 in Seattle. He said the group performs well in any situation, but they excel in intimate shows at smaller venues.

Alumnus Jeremy Morton, who organized the show, said he has been a fan of the group for several years, and after talks about a Kirksville show fell through two years ago, the band contacted him during January to revive the idea.

"I'm pretty excited to work with them, to play with them," Morton said. "It's a little daunting setting up a show of this size, but I'm confident it will go well. It's definitely a confidence-booster."

Morton said though Kirksville is not a usual stop for many popular bands, it just takes planning and a bit of know-how to set up a big show. He said anyone who wants to bring a band to Kirksville should get in contact with someone who has experience setting up shows.

"All it takes is someone knowing someone else and it can work out," Morton said.



Submitted photo

Lovedrug will play Friday night at the Aquadome. This alternative rock band from Canton, Ohio has opened for performers such as Robert Plant, and The Killers.

He said he wouldn't suggest someone without band promotion experience try to organize a large show by themselves, but there are several people like him in the area who have experience promoting music.

Morton said he thinks one of the reasons attendance is sometimes low at Kirksville shows is because people don't want to pay for tickets. He said people would pay much more in St. Louis or Kansas City to see bands like Lovedrug, but it seems that people still are hesitant to pay

in Kirksville.

Morton's band Tom Sauk and St. Louis band Golden Curls will open for Lovedrug. Morton describes Tom Sauk as indie folk, and Golden Curls is described as "woozy pop" on their bandcamp page.

Lovedrug also will be on KTRM at 3 tomorrow afternoon.

The show begins at 7:00 p.m. tomorrow. Tickets are \$5 in advance or \$6 at the door. Contact Trent Dickerson at tpd7273@truman.edu for tickets.