

Charity gets "ugly"

Students raise money by participating in a non-traditional pageant

BY SCOTT HENSON
Staff Reporter

Senior Kim Baker entered the Baldwin Auditorium stage in a sparkling Dolly Parton Halloween dress, strutting to the tune of Miley Cyrus' "Party in the U.S.A." in the Ugly Man on Campus pageant during the fall 2010 semester. Now, she said, she can't wait to sit in the audience and watch what this year's pageant hopefuls have to offer the crowd and the charities they represent.

UMOC, Alpha Phi Omega's annual mock co-ed beauty pageant, is at 7 p.m. Nov. 10 in Baldwin Auditorium. APO currently is seeking contestants to represent organizations across campus in a series of off-beat performances in the name of fun and philanthropy.

Senior Jasmin Williams and junior Nena Koseva are APO's UMOC co-chairs. Williams said the event goes against the grain of typical beauty pageants, in which contestants strive for perfection. Instead, Koseva said, UMOC is the contestant's opportunity to be creative and not to take themselves too seriously.

"It kind of shows that beauty is overrated, and people don't actually have to look [externally] beautiful." Koseva said. "They can show their inner side."

UMOC follows a familiar pageant format, which includes formal wear, question and answer, and talent portions. Williams said it differs from these competitions because formal wear might include a tutu and hula-hoops, questions in the question and answer round are of a whimsical nature and talent acts often are memorably ridiculous.

"Last year, one of the participants, and I'll never forget this, he sang Justin Bieber's 'Baby,' and every time the 'baby baby' part came on, he'd lift up his shirt, poke out his stomach and rub his stomach," she said.

Aside from entertaining crowds, UMOC is a fundraising event for charitable organizations. Half the proceeds from this year's UMOC will go to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, while the other half will go to a charity of the winning organization's choice, Williams said. Last year, the event generated about \$700 for charities from donations and revenue from admission

tickets, which cost \$2 in advance and \$3 at the door.

Cans for collecting donations, along with the nominees' pictures, will be set out Monday on tables in McClain, Magruder and Violette halls as well as in the Student Union Building.

Koseva said APO hopes to find nominees from multiple organizations, whom she and Williams will narrow down to 10 finalists, depending on which nominees' cans collect the most money. Those finalists then will move on to the pageant where three judges will help determine a winner based on their creativity and willingness to poke fun at themselves.

Senior Ali Coats, a Sigma Kappa member, gave the winning performance last year, wearing a "gold and gaudy" themed outfit for the evening wear competition and performing a dramatic reading of Katy Perry's "Teenage Dream" during the show's talent portion. She said the show's silly atmosphere aligned well with her personality.

"I'm a really bubbly, quirky person, and I've also always done theater all throughout high school," she said. "I'm very much a performer ... so a chance to get up on stage and act silly was just dandy."

Coats said one of the most rewarding aspects of the competition

was being able to exercise her natural quirkiness to win money for her organization's charity, the Sigma Kappa Foundation, which funds Parkinson's disease research among other causes. A few of Coats' family members have suffered from Parkinson's, she said, making her win all the more meaningful to her.

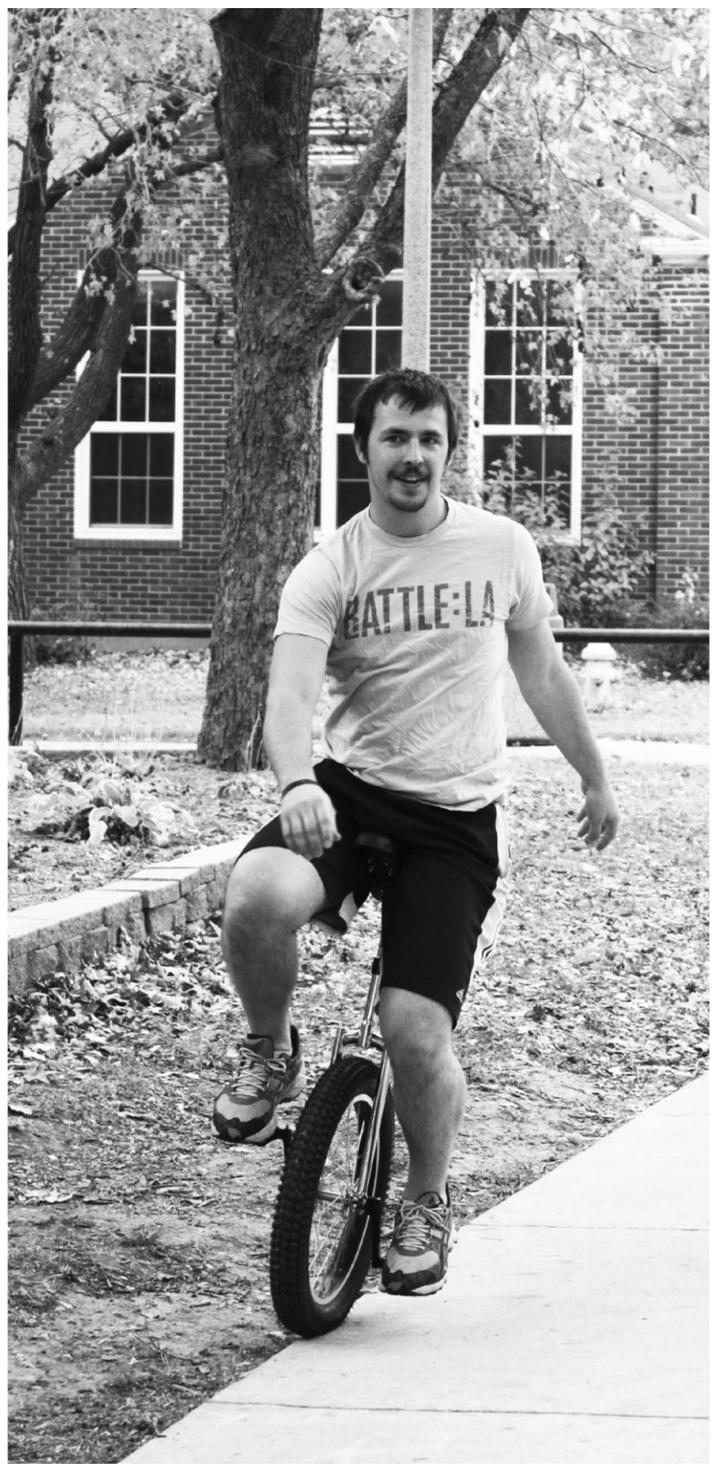
"[Sigma Kappa members] do little events here and there, where we all devote an amount of our time to something," she said. "But to actually win a huge chunk of cash to be given directly to the Sigma Kappa Foundation felt pretty good."

Koseva said APO chapters at other universities have been able to generate thousands of dollars for various charities with their UMOC events. She and Williams said they are trying to follow suit by getting more contestants on board. Williams said that in publicizing the event, they are trying to emphasize creativity and fun as opposed to any "ugliness" the title might imply. Creativity, she said, is one of the most important elements of the pageant, and key to its ability to raise money.

"Everyone comes up with different ideas, out-of-the-box kind of ideas," she said. "It's fun, and everything is for a good cause."

It kind of shows that beauty is overrated, and people don't actually have to look [externally] beautiful. — Nena Koseva junior

Students cycle on campus



Senior Troy Heumphreus practices unicycling on campus. Heumphreus shares his passion for unicycling by teaching others.

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