

SMOKIN' HOT BBQ FEST

REBECCA WORTHINGTON

PHOTO EDITOR

The weather wasn't the only thing heating up downtown this weekend. Main Street turned into a barbecue block party with a barbecue cook-off and an impressive musical lineup.

I have been going to BBQ Fest for the past few years and have never seen crowds so enthralled by the music. I expected the festival to be all about barbecue but I was



Photo by Rebecca Worthington | Photo Editor
Jameson Rodgers and his bandmates performing at BBQ Fest.

more drawn to the music. You might come for the barbecue but you stay for the music.

In its 15th year, the festival pulled out all the stops. On either end of downtown, two professional-grade stages glistened and boomed.

The festival's two headliners were rising country artists Jameson Rodgers and TikTok sensation Priscilla Block.

On Friday night, crowd goers were excited for Block to perform. Fans lined up at

the barricade nearly four hours before she performed and were seen decked out in the country artist's merch. You couldn't miss the bright neon construction vests, which I later learned are a part of Block's brand.

Fan commitment continued Saturday night when Jameson Rodgers fans flocked in with their cowboy hats. The festival staff threw light-up bracelets into the crowd and luckily, I managed to catch one.

The blinking bracelets were a fun, small detail that added to the experience. A 10/10 free souvenir and who knows, the bracelet battery probably will never die. I might take it to next year's festival.

At the other end of the fest, I could hear the fans screaming every lyric. There was not a lyric missed by the vibrant crowds.

Aside from the headliners, there were many local bands. A local jam band, Big Boy Changes, featured several Arkansas State University students and alumni

gracing the main stage.

I find it awesome that festival organizers bring in huge music names but also spotlight local talents right here in Jonesboro and at A-State.

The festival also featured a barbecue cook-off, offering \$13,000 in prize money for the barbecue contestants. The contest is sanctioned by the Kansas City Barbecue Society. The grand winner will move on to the national invitational.

Main Street was overflowing with bustling festival goers, food stalls and trucks, crafts vendors and alluring aromas of smoky barbecue and brisket. It was hard to decide which food truck to buy from but I settled on Trauma Hogs BBQ.

I have seen their food truck around Jonesboro for some time and decided to try them out. I ordered the pulled pork sandwich, which was great. The sandwich had a great flavor, so I'll be taking a trip to their storefront in Brookland, Arkansas.



Photo by Rebecca Worthington | Photo Editor
Priscilla Block performing at BBQ Fest.

Littered between food trucks and music stages were many small businesses. Selling everything from homemade artworks to resold merchandise, there was something for everyone to take home.

The festival had a great atmosphere, good food and good music. The fundamentals of a great festival. It is safe to

say BBQ Fest is my favorite festival Jonesboro has to offer.

Jonesboro's BBQ Fest continues to impress the community and prove it is the top festival northeast Arkansas has to offer. I'm excited to see who they bring in to perform for our community next year.

For more photos, visit astatetheherald.com.

THIS WEEK'S POP PICK

JERRY DON BURTON | COPY EDITOR

"SAW X"



PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB

The 10th installment in the "Saw" franchise, "Saw X" delivers a thrilling return to form that die-hard fans of the series and newcomers alike can enjoy.

Set between the events of "Saw I" and "Saw II," "Saw X" boasts one of the least convoluted and plot-hole-stricken stories in the series. The film follows the antagonist of the "Saw" franchise, John Kramer, as he travels to Mexico to undergo experimental surgery in an effort to cure his terminal cancer. It doesn't go as planned and Kramer finds himself with a new group of victims to test for his twisted games.

Compared to previous installments, "Saw X" devotes more time building realistic characters. While this results in a slower-paced introduction, the film is all the better for it with characters that the audience cares for.

Kramer, who is generally only seen in flashbacks and heard through tape recordings in a majority of the Saw franchise, acts as a proper lead in "Saw X." The initial slow pacing of the film is devoted not

only to personalizing Kramer, but also the victims of his traps.

Typically in the "Saw" series, the audience is introduced to Kramer's victims as they wake up in their trap. The audience then learns how and why the victims ended up in the trap through a series of often jarring flashbacks and exposition. Since "Saw X" instead spends time building these characters early, by the time they're stuck in their perilous traps, the audience already knows how and why they ended up there.

While most characters in "Saw X" are developed and multifaceted, some fall flat and lack realistic motivations for their actions. One character in particular, who I won't name due to spoilers, is absurdly evil for no discernible reason other than to fulfill their role as a foil to Kramer.

No "Saw" movie is complete without a collection of gruesome traps and clever plot twists and "Saw X" mostly delivers.

The majority of the eight traps are appropriately designed around the misdeeds of each victim. The few that aren't as symbolically relevant still provide plenty of cringe-inducing inventive violence. Overall, the traps in this film cut a nice balance between deep, emblematic punishment and simple, gory dismemberment.

The plot twist was weaker than some previous entries, but with a concise, simpler plot, there's less room to include a creative twist. Additionally, because "Saw X" is set between the first two films in the series, the twist couldn't disrupt the timeline of events leading up to "Saw III."

It's clear that caution was taken with "Saw X" to avoid a convoluted plot, shallow characters and other pitfalls that plagued previous "Saw" films. Despite some characters still feeling one-dimensional, this new direction in the "Saw" franchise is a welcome change.

What truly sealed the deal for me was the post-credits scene, which finally gave screen time to a fan-favorite character who had been teased throughout the film, thus making "Saw X" an enthralling watch for both new and returning fans.

A curious review of the dog in the night-time

CAROLINE AVERITT

LIFE EDITOR

Upon hearing the title, "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time," I expected a light-hearted comedy. Instead, I saw a performance about being an outsider, dishonesty and of course, the death of a beloved dog.

The Arkansas State University Department of Theatre opened "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" Sept. 29 and it did not disappoint.

The story begins with a teenage boy named Christopher Boone who finds his neighbor's dog, Wellington, stabbed to death with a garden fork. In an effort to find a sense of control in his life, he becomes determined to find the dog's killer.

Even though the inciting incident of this play has to do with the dog, the play is much more than a murder mystery. In fact, the killer is revealed in act one. The play is really about an outsider and his father's desperation to connect with him.

Neither the play, written by Simon Stephens, nor the book of the same name, written by Mark Haddon, give Christopher an official diagnosis. However, it is clear that Christopher has social difficulty and has many meltdowns over the course of the show, which leads many to believe he has autism spectrum disorder.

I'll be honest: I was afraid this play would poke fun at disability. However, it showed all of Christopher's difficulties



Photo by Rebecca Worthington | Photo Editor
Alex Jones (left) and Kaito Ito (right) practicing at a dress rehearsal.

in a real and honest way without looking down on him.

I went to the play's opening night and I was wowed by the actors and their ability to portray serious situations with a bare bones set and hardly any props.

Kaito Ito, a senior theatre major from Tokyo, plays Christopher Boone. He gave a great performance in which he portrayed meltdowns and missed social cues in a respectful and powerful way.

Another incredible performance was given by Alex Jones, a senior theatre major from Russellville, Arkansas. He plays Ed Boone, Christopher's father, in such a way that shows all the complexity of raising a struggling child.

While Christopher is investigating the dog's murder, he discovers secrets his father had been keeping from him. This is the major conflict of the play, as Christopher makes it abundantly clear he hates lies.

Ito and Jones had excellent chemistry and as I watched them depict a father-son relationship

that was falling apart, I almost forgot I was watching a play.

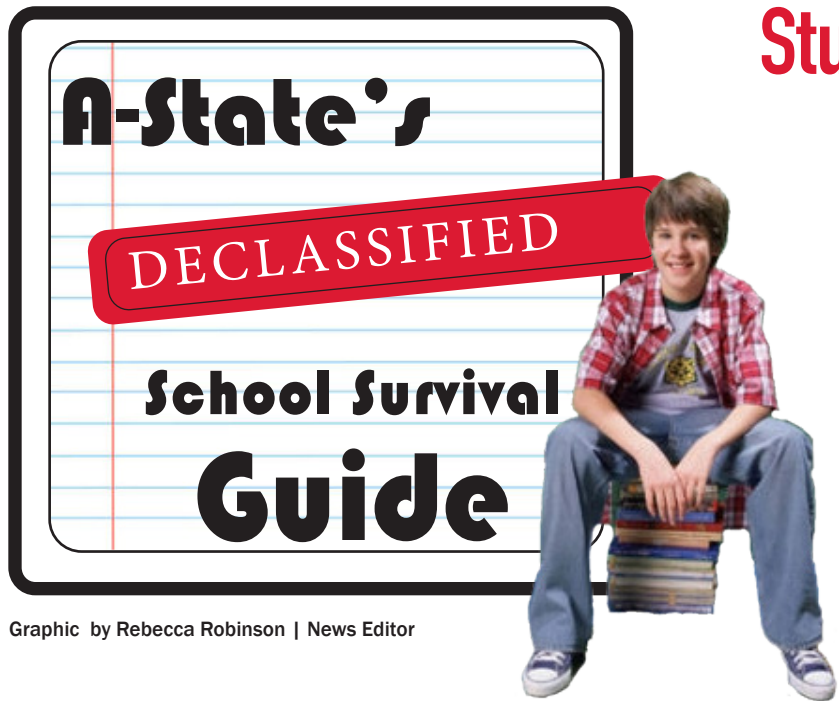
This show does not shy away from the hard parts of being different. There are instances in which Ed gets angry with Christopher and yells at him until he melts down. This is where Jones shined. He showed frustration with Christopher, but never left the audience wondering if he loved his son.

I loved this performance. Each and every actor, from the lead to the ensemble, brought something important to the table and made a complex story come to life.

The play does contain profanity and descriptions of animal abuse. While there are mature elements, the show leaves the audience with hope and resolution.

I would recommend anyone to go see this show. There will be three more performances, Oct. 6-7 at 7:30 p.m. and Oct. 8 at 2:30 p.m. in the Simpson Theatre. Students can get in free upon showing their student ID.

Student Speak: What is your midterm survival tip?



Graphic by Rebecca Robinson | News Editor



Photo by Shailey Wooldridge | Staff Writer
Esmeralda Figueroa is a first-year sports medicine major from Green Forest, Arkansas.

Esmeralda said:

“Just because you pay attention during a lecture doesn’t mean you already know everything. Make sure you study and take full advantage of the library.”



Photo by Shailey Wooldridge | Staff Writer
Xavion Huff is a junior psychology major from Marion, Arkansas.

Xavion said:

“Accept that you have to put your social life on the back burner. Midterms will kill you and you don’t expect that.”



Photo by Anna Cox | Copy Editor
Jacob Strawn is a senior political science and English major from North Little Rock.

Jacob said:

“Read your syllabus. Everything you’d ever need to know is actually in there, believe it or not.”

For more, visit astatetheherald.com.

Club Spotlight: Red Wolves Cornhole

RACHEL RUDD

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

For members of Red Wolves Cornhole, cornhole is more than a game, but rather, a professional sport and a way to unwind.

The club was founded last semester by Sebastian Barger, a sophomore mathematics major from Paragould.

“I’m a professional cornhole player myself. I have been for three years,” Barger said. “So I thought the students here would really like to have the opportunity to play the game. I thought it’d be fun for me to teach people.”

At the moment, 10-15 people show up to the meetings. Meetings are open to both students and the community.

The club is for people of all skill levels.

“We have multiple boards, so we can have multiple levels of play,” said Mitch Mathis, faculty adviser and instructor in the Health, Physical Education and Sports Sciences Department. “So the higher skilled players can go down on one end, while the learners can still be on the other end and we can work with them and talk strategy and technique and those kinds of things.”

The meetings consist of bracket tournaments, with participants in a “switchholio,” where students are given random partners for four games. Winners of the switchholio go into a double elimination bracket until there’s a winner.

Barger said new players can have difficulty handling the cornhole bags, as well as figuring out their play styles.

“They’re all kind of like, balled up and planted or whatever,” Barger said.

“With cornhole, there’s two different sides to the bag, but one’s slow and one’s fast. So we got to learn how to control which side of the bag you land on.”

There are different play styles in cornhole, such as using blockers. Blockers are bags thrown in front of the hole in order to prevent another player’s bags from entering.

“It’s actually a lot more like chess than you think, because there’s so much strategy involved. There’s so much different stuff you can do. But it really depends on your play style and what you play best at,” Barger said.

Club member Luke Hearn, a sophomore vocal education major from Salem, Arkansas, said the club is a way for him to destress and connect with the cornhole community.

“In school, you have a lot of stress, a lot of classes. So it’s just having something to do that doesn’t put a lot of stress on you, just having something to do just for fun,” Hearn said.

“The cornhole community, it’s such a big community that’s not really talked about. It’s just good to go out and have fun with your friends and not have to worry about a whole lot.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE RED WOLVES CORNHOLE FACEBOOK PAGE

Sebastian Barger posing with a cornhole board after winning the tournament on Sept. 27.

At the moment, the club is focusing on getting new members and promoting itself. In the future, however, both Barger and Mitchell said they would like to start taking the club to tournaments. The club has been using the Daily Digest and word of mouth to let students know about it.

“We’re grassrootsing and starting out so a lot of people see cornhole as a bar game, which it probably is, but it’s more of the social aspect. What we’re trying to do right now is get people of like-mind and give you a chance to network, because you never know when you might meet somebody,” Mathis said.

Meetings are on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in the archery room of the Health, Physical Education and Sports Sciences Building.

@ASTATECATFACTS Q & A

ANNA COX

COPY EDITOR

A mysterious figure has been on Yik Yak, and more recently Instagram, posting daily cat facts for the Arkansas State University students.

Ronnie Tindel, a sophomore music education major from Jonesboro, is the man behind the cat account.

Q: What made you start A-State Cat Facts?

A: “Creating this account felt like another account to share things I love. I have an account where I spin my flag and talk about a lot of flag stuff on. So I asked Yik Yak if this was something I should make.”

Q: Why did you begin the journey on Yik Yak?

A: “I started on Yik Yak because I saw people doing little daily things and I just honestly thought cat facts would be cool! It’s a common pet so why not know something new about your furry little friend!”

Q: Where do you get your cat facts?

A: “I look online for facts that come from a credible source. There’s many .edu websites that have factual facts.”

Q: What makes you interested in cats?

A: “I love cats. They are a mini version of a tiger! I just love all the different patterns in their fur and different colors. They are truly a great animal that can survive in the wilderness on their own!”

Q: Do you own a cat?

A: “I do own a cat! Her name is Effie! She’s a doll when she wants to be and loves dogs. She loves to play but when she has had enough she will let you know.”

Q: What’s your favorite breed of cat?

A: “I love tabby cats.”

Q: What do you hope to gain out of A-State Cat Facts?

A: “I’m hoping to let people become knowledgeable about their cats!”

Q: What will happen to the account when you graduate?

A: “I’m hoping to find someone to take over! If anyone wants to start like a cat fact club send them to me and I can get stuff going!”

Q: Do you have anything to add?

A: “What I have to add is to be nice to your cats! They are precious and they are great animals! If anyone wants to start a cat club so we can have take over things and such, let me know!”

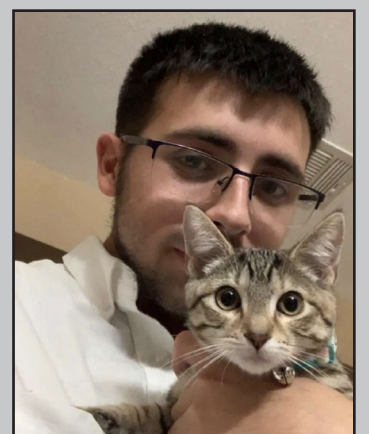


PHOTO COURTESY OF RONNIE TINDEL
Ronnie Tindel’s with his cat.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RONNIE TINDEL
Ronnie Tindel’s cat Effie.