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CALLIE STEPHENS/Archive
RACHEL HARRIS, Daniel McFarlin, Bethany Whitfield, Alexis Pace, Jake Coffman and Michelle Lackey sing during the Ouachita Sounds and Tiger Blast concert last March. The groups will be in concert again tomorrow night.

Focus Week activities traditional, yet fresh

By NOAH HUTCHINSON
Signal Writer

Under normal circumstances, the most popular way to spend an hour of canceled classes would be a nap. However, the people in charge of Christian Focus Week are hoping students will use their time to re-focus their relationship with Christ rather than re-focusing their sleep schedule.

"If people don't choose to participate, then they don't get the benefit," said Ian Cosh, vice president for community and international engagement. "Then the whole thing was a waste. I hope they fight the temptation to take a nap and come willing to be surprised."

Christian Focus Week is a long-standing tradition that has been going on for four decades.

"Christian Focus Week is a time where we can focus on our walk of faith and celebrate our tradition as Ouachatonians," Cosh said. "It's so important to the school that we allow classes to be canceled. That doesn't happen for any other event."

Because Christian Focus Week is set heavily in tradition, it does not change much from year to year. "Part of its power is in its consistency," Cosh said.

The only major changes that can be expected from last year to this year are the new speakers and musicians.

"The speakers always change," Cosh said. "And then there are always new students as well, so it'll always be different for them. I think there's a strength in familiarity, but I would hope the seniors could compare and contrast."

Although the event may not change much from year to year, Cosh believes it still has value not only for new students, but also for students who have attended before.

"It's really a matter of stewardship," Cosh said. "People are invited take it seriously. It's a very unique opportunity for them, as well as a significant challenge. They're addressing an entire student body. The speakers are prepared, and they'll certainly do their best."

Cosh also believes the event's consistency is important. **see CFW, p. 2**

Sounds, Blast in concert

'Energetic' show includes variety of music

By LINDSEY UPSHAW
Signal Writer

The members of Tiger Blast and Ouachita Sounds are preparing for their annual concert set for tomorrow in Jones Performing Arts Center.

Tiger Blast is a mixture of marching band, color guard and marching percussion techniques that is quickly becoming one of Ouachita's most popular performing ensembles. The ensemble performs at Festival of Christmas, Tiger Tunes and local elementary schools.

"Dr. Hesse spends a lot of time looking through music and organizing it so audience members will enjoy the show," said Deborah Caldwell, a junior instrumental music education major. "We spend the week before the performance meeting to memorize our music and put our choreography in."

Caldwell said some of her favorite memories have come from being in the band.

"I love being with other band students and directors as we work together to create energetic shows," she said. "It is an incredible time to have fun, work hard and get to know other people in the band."

Alex Lomax, a junior biology major, said Tiger Blast is performing some of their fall marching show, like the song "Dynamite," and a drum feature piece on buckets. They will also perform "I Like It" and "Body and Soul."

Ouachita Sounds is a show choir that performs songs from a wide variety of genres, along with choreography. This year, Sounds performed at Festival of Christmas, the 125th Musical Showcase and the Hot Springs Coun-

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CALLIE STEPHENS/Archive
KELSEY BATES performs during last year's Tiger Blast and Ouachita Sounds concert.

Choir, band members selected for Arkansas Intercollegiate group

By KELSEY KEARNEY
Signal Writer

The Arkansas Music Educator's Conference is an annual two-day workshop for the state's music teachers and directors. This year's conference will be held in Hot Springs. This conference is an important event for music educators of every level, as they are able to attend sessions and hone their crafts.

Music students from across the state will also attend the workshop, where they will take part in the Arkansas Intercollegiate Choir and the Arkansas Intercollegiate Band, and several Ouachita students have been selected for both groups.

"Having an opportunity to be in the Arkansas Intercollegiate Choir is such a blessing," said DeCarl Jones, a sophomore vocal performance major. "Music has always been my outlet, and it is an amazing gift to be able to share with others."

This is the choir's first year to sing at the conference.

"I am excited that this is the first time this choir has been formed," said Dr. Gary Gerber, associate professor of music and director of choral activities. "The band has done this for many, many years, and I always wondered why there was no choir. Students are selected by the college choir director. Because the conference is for music educators, we like to select music education majors, but it is not limited to

members of other majors."

Gerber said he hopes the music education students will be able to use the conference to get a taste of their futures.

"I like to give them practical experience, networking and get them into the process of going to conferences and conventions," he said.

The chorus is comprised of 80 singers, and the students are divided into groups of quartets or octets. The music for the selected pieces is sent to the participants in advance, and they learn and rehearse the music in preparation for the concert.

While the choir is a new addition, the Intercollegiate Band has been participating for some time.

"I am absolutely honored to be part of the Arkansas Intercollegiate Band again," said Kelsey Bates, a senior music education major. "This is my fourth opportunity to get to participate in this honor band. I look forward to it every year."

Students participating in the band are nominated by their band directors and audition for their spot in the band the first morning of the conference. They rehearse Thursday and Friday morning and complete their performance Friday afternoon.

"This band is a wonderful way to showcase the outstanding talent in Ar-

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— DeCarl Jones