



The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus from Hugo, Okla. performed a circus Wednesday at Lyons High School. (Right) All-purpose performer Simone Dykes shows off one of Siberian Tigers. Simone performs unicycle, single trapeze and as a professional clown.

(Photos by Godfrey Miheso)

Circus makes a stop in Lyons

BY GODFREY MIHESO
LYONS NEWS INTERN

The lost small-town tradition of family time best describes the Culpepper and Merriweather Circus staged at the Lyons High School parking lot Wednesday.

"We are trying to bring about the circus tradition alive, something that the entire family will watch together and

remember for ages," said performer Simone Dykes.

The community witnessed one-of-a-kind family entertainment under a professional setup of 27 crew members.

As a self-described "sketer," Simone performs unicycle, single trapeze and as a professional clown several times a week.

Circus entertainment

involves road trips to small cities and towns where this group of performers leave behind and ask for more.

Traveling at early hours of the morning has been the greatest challenge for the group.

However, Simone indicates that it is more satisfying when the audience yearns for more entertainment and

remember her performances even after a number of years.

The acts and performances included trapeze, dog-and-pony show, high wire, hula hoops and comic Melvin riding.

Simone said it takes a commitment to be a professional in circus.

"Loving animals is not enough," she said. "Discipline and spirit to

overcome challenges that come along with handling animals is vital."

She said the Siberian Tigers and lions require 18 to 20 hours of daily sleep, but enough time must be set aside for them to prepare for any show.

"They enjoy a set time for meal and rest," she said.

She indicated that

the tigers and lions eat about 10 pounds of raw beef six days a week.

As per the expectation, performing for the first time in Lyons, Culpepper and Merriweather Circus members said they hope to make Lyons an annual event.

"Small towns like Lyons are our target in bringing back the circus tradition," Simone said.

County Mud Run



Drivers young and old enjoyed the opening of the Rice County Mud Runners summer season May 28 at a pit in southeast Rice County near 21st Road and Ave Q. (Saxman Road). For information, call (620) 257-8312 or (620) 680-1642.

(Photos by Kim Craigmyle and Jacque Modrow)

(Top) Bob Wilson, U.S. Navy (retired) delivered the Memorial Day speech. The women's auxiliary participated. (Bottom) The master of ceremonies was James Blake, outgoing Lyons VFW commander. (Photos by Jacque Modrow)