

By Vickie Schlepp

Labor Day Weekend is almost here! Those of us at Bonny Lake State Park are working hard to make this last summer holiday weekend an enjoyable one for the visitors and campers. For this Labor Day weekend we will be having several programs at the park amphitheater that will both entertain and inform.

On Saturday, Sept. 4, at 7 p.m. we will have Pam Coulter from Wray. She will be presenting her program "Learning with the Heart." Join us as Pam teaches us about the culture of the Native American Indian and entertains us with Native American music. This is a fun and interesting program.

On Sunday, Sept. 5, at 7 p.m. the Crooked Creek group will be entertaining us with popular western songs along with a few songs from the 60s and 70s. Come, relax, and enjoy an evening of music entertainment.

There will also be a new scavenger hunt for the kids and family this weekend. This is a fun way to explore the park and see what you can find. There will be lots of things that you didn't expect to see!

Pick up your scavenger hunt packet at the Visitor's Center and start having fun finding all the items. You have all weekend to enjoy the hunt. After you have completed all the tasks, bring the scavenger hunt sheet back to the Visitor's Center for a surprise!

Also check out the newest activity at the park, Geocaching, using a GPS (Global Positioning System) unit. The activity basically involves a Global Positioning System user hiding "treasure" (a container and its contents), and publishing the exact coordinates so other Global Positioning System users can come on a "treasure hunt" to find it. The only rules are: if you take something from the cache, you must leave something for the cache, and you must write about your visit in the logbook. We have hidden five boxes for you to find with a Global Positioning System unit, some are easy, some are more difficult.

Stop by the Visitor's Center to get the coordinates to start your treasure hunt. For those of you who want to try your hand at this, but don't have a unit, we have units available to loan you for a small donation of \$2 per unit.

• Water levels and boating – As of Aug. 26, lake elevation was 3,653 or 11,900 ac/ft. The state water engineer has stopped the flood water release with 5,000 ac/ft being released. This means the boat ramp should be usable for most all boats for the Labor Day weekend!

Water level is currently 4 feet in depth and 3.5 foot depth at the sandbar. The lake is open for boating.

• Night operation is not allowed weekdays (Sunday night to Thursday night) due to budget cuts. Also due to staffing reductions, there will be times that boating will be at your own risk.

• Hunting – The park is closed to hunting until the day after Labor Day, Sept. 7. Dove population is about average. Cover is very thick.

• Fishing report – The water temperature is at 71 degrees. Several walleye and white bass have been taken off the face of the dam with crank baits. A few (some people with limits) catfish have also been taken off the north shore or off boats with typical baits. White bass have also been taken while schooling. Due to budget cuts, fishing licenses are no longer sold at the visitor center.

• Trails and road Conditions – The OHV area is accessible but with a few ruts due to recent rains. There are a couple of trails still closed due to water and ruts. For the most part, roads throughout the park are in good shape.

• Swimming - The swim line has been pulled and the swim beach closed. Swimming is only allowed from boats displaying an orange flag and swimmers wearing PFD's. Some sandy beach is starting to show up near the dam at East Beach.

• Camping - Wagon Wheel campground is currently booked full for the Labor Day weekend. Foster Grove campground will have 15 sites open for first come/first served campers (no reservations) for Labor Day weekend. East Beach and North Cove campgrounds have been closed permanently due to budget reductions. The road construction between Idalia and Bonny Lake State Park is nearly all done.

• Fire restrictions - Fires are only allowed in Wagon Wheel and Foster Grove campgrounds inside designated fire rings. No fires anywhere else. Propane grills and stoves are allowed.



TY ZWEYGARDT runs the ball during the soap scrimmage held on Friday night. Herald staff photo by Casey McCormick

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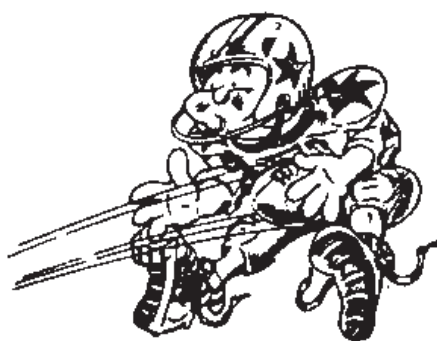
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The Saint Francis Herald
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