

The smell of glory hits Gallup once again

Written by Gallupsun Staff

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Sixth Annual Rotten Sneaker Contest WAFTS through town

There's a classic rock song called "That Smell," by Lynyrd Skynyrd, which aptly describes an event held at the Gallup Walmart Sept. 15.

It was the Sixth Annual Rotten Sneaker Contest sponsored by Odor-Eaters and Walmart, where contestants from Gallup and the surrounding area sign up for to pursue victory in the art of smelly, odorous, rotten sneakers.

Odor-Eaters chose the Gallup Walmart, 1650 W. Maloney Ave., for the past six years because the store sells more Odor-Eaters products than elsewhere. The contest's primarily open to kids, but this year, a few adults entered the contest to take on the smelly youth — to no avail.

Representatives from Odor-Eaters scoured Walmart in hopes of finding kids who were willing to participate in this unique and fun event.

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Each contestant was awarded a \$10 Walmart gift card for entering the contest.

Refreshments were on hand as contestants signed up, ready to compete with other stinky bipeds.

Local radio personalities were asked to be the judges, sniffing out the competition — the noses included “JC” from the Classic Rock station 93X; veteran sniffer Sammy C from Rockin’ Oldies Keeva FM; and newcomer, Al Zane, also from Keeva FM.

Zane laughed when asked why he decided to participate. He said he thought it might be fun.

“I don’t know why but everybody told me it’s a lot of fun,” he said. “But also it’s a smelly mess, so you got to experience something in life — might as well try this, huh?”

Also new to the competition and to the Odor-Eaters company was representative Logan Lakey, who said he jumped aboard when invited to participate.

“Man, it’s an exciting event, something you don’t see very often, a real focused, tight community event at a Walmart store,” he said. “It’s my first time here and it was great to come visit and see this whole event and to take part of it, it’s been great so far.”

Lakey said this was his first year on the job and he “was volunteered to be the new guy,” but was happy to attend.

Another representative from the company and no stranger to the event is David Gugino, who’s been attending for the past six years. He said he enjoys coming back year after year to find out who has the most rotten sneakers of all.

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“We’re going to find the rottenest sneaker of all of the surrounding area,” he said. “You know, every year, they seem to smell worse and worse [laughing]. I don’t know but I think the kids are getting smart, they’re getting savvy by wearing their shoes without socks prior to the event.”

The event kicked off with a new treat — local Miyamura High School Patriots Dance Team performed dance routines for the audience and contestants.

Gugino addressed the crowd, poking fun at the rules of the contest and announcing the awards to be given out for the most rotten, smelly and odorous shoe ever cultivated here in these parts.

The contestants were ready, the crowd was ready, and the judges had a look of apprehension on their faces.

Each contestant removed a shoe and gave it to the judges for a discerning whiff.

The contestants were asked about their secrets in cultivating the noxious fumes wafting from their shoes. Smells were judged from 1 to 5 — 5 being rotten, and the grimacing look on the judges’ faces indicated there were plenty of 5s.

“I’m sure it’s not the heat, but I’m starting to get a little woozy,” Zane said.

Winners were announced while oxygen was given to revive the judges.

Third place went to 7-year-old Acacia Arviso; second place went to 9-year-old Alysa Acevedo; and the first place winner of the Rotten Sneaker contest was 5-year-old April Taylor, who said playing outside with no socks on is the key to success. She won a \$200 Walmart gift card, a trophy and a basket filled with Odor-Eaters products.

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“I sometimes forget to put my socks on when I go outside,” Taylor said.

Members of the audience were treated to free Odor-Eaters products like T-shirts, hats and foot products for the entire family.

***By Dee Velasco
For the Sun***