

LOCAL / STATE

Saturday, April 19, 2008 3A

crowd r skills

hit TV show "American Idol" — held up scorecards at the end of each performance. Contestants were judged on three aspects: technique, stage presence and airiness. Judges look for realism and attitude in the performance. Cosmes also counted. The airiness is the X factor," said Sandwell, who has competed in air guitar competitions in other states. "Can you make it as interesting and fun as a real guitar?" One thing was for sure — the performers and the audience members had their share of a Friday night. Mary Sandwell said she loves to watch her son perform. "Warren is the embodiment of airiness. He's just pure."

vivor's story

rollton, 30 miles away. The dents were mesmerized. I had 100 eighth-graders who never met a Jewish lady before," Rule said. "They sat crunched." After joining the high school faculty last year, Rule decided to honor Mandler with an original play. Hannah Morgan, 16, portrayed the young Mandler from a carefree teenager to a fugitive and prisoner. Morgan, the daughter of a Baptist preacher whose only previous acting experience came in church holiday pageants, said Mandler's story has awakened many of her classmates. Gone are the stereotypes of unfamiliar people. In their place is understanding, and compassion. It's not just a story in a textbook. They're not just pictures with faces," she said. "These are actual people."

Roaring Falls ensures riders get drenched

Chill doesn't stop patrons from enjoying new theme park ride.

By Dirk VanderHart
DVANDERHART@NEWS-LEADER.COM

Here's the thing about the new Roaring Falls ride at Celebration City:

It's going to get you wet.

Go ahead and wear a plastic poncho. Curl up inside it, make sure it's covering your entire person.

Do what you have to, but know that when you get off the ride, the water will probably have seeped to your skin.

That's what the multi-million-dollar contraption was made to do, and it works.

And this probably feels amazing on a sultry, sunny summer day in southwest Missouri.

But the thing about Friday, the day Celebration City chose to unveil its newest attraction, was this:

It was neither sultry nor sunny. It was sear-breath chilly. And gray. And windy.

So it is perhaps to the new ride's credit that many of those who attended its first public showing seemed to love Roaring Falls.

"I'm not gonna lie, that was the coolest ride I ever rode," averred a shivering Jonathan Goodman, one of the first 20 people to try out the attraction. "It was worth it. So worth it."

Goodman attended the ride's opening with classmates from the Acts Christian Academy in Branson West, who came to the event for a field trip. Among the more gung-ho of Goodman's classmates was Shea Stafford, a freshman who passed up the opportunity to don a poncho for the ride's maiden voyage, electing instead to soak his T-shirt and shorts.

Standing on the attraction's observation deck after the ride, Stafford offered classmates an exaggerated account of his trip down the falls.

"I felt like Noah. Or Moses splitting the Red Sea," he said. "I'll probably regret it tomorrow." He went on to ride several more times.

Like similar attractions at amusement parks throughout the country, Roaring Falls ferries riders up a roller-coaster-like incline before dropping them 50 feet into a reservoir of wa-

Video animation:
Take a virtual ride on the Roaring Falls at Celebration City by viewing an animation of the new water attraction.



AMBER ARNOLD / NEWS-LEADER

A group rides the new Roaring Falls on Friday at Celebration City in Branson.

ter. The resulting splash soaks riders and observers alike.

Friday was Celebration City's first operating day of the year, and the park opened its doors hours early to allow a chosen few the opportunity to test out the new water ride.

Many riders, most of them from Acts, used their exclusive access to ride Roaring Falls again and again.

Some decided the cold was too much.

Like his friend Stafford, Chris Stone passed up a poncho when trying the ride for himself.

Unlike Stafford, the experience left him feeling decidedly unbiblical.

"I'm done!" he exclaimed as he shook off the water cascading from his hair and T-shirt. "I'm done."

BIGGEST ONE DAY SALE OF THE SEASON
LOWEST PRICES