

Sara Morgan: Singing today's country with old-fashioned sound

BY KAREN LA PIERRE

Combining old-fashioned country-western sounds with a modern writing style, up and coming singer songwriter Sara Morgan will perform at 7 p.m. July 14 at the Ellinwood After Harvest Festival.

Growing up in the small town of McGehee, Ark., a town two hours from Little Rock, Morgan was one of eight children. Those roots remain important to her and are reflected in the lyrics of the songs she writes.

"We grew up in a farming community, running around in the fields," she said. "I was raised on it. I was raised with country music."

She loves the music of the pillars of the country western community like Dolly Parton and Loretta Lynn, and movies like "Coal Miner's Daughter" and "Steel Magnolias." These legends stand the test of time.

"I like (them), just classy people that I look up to," she said.

Morgan says she kind of an old-fashioned person for a millennial and enjoys participating in the country western music industry that allows her to maintain values.

Those values are reflected in the donation to a farming scholarship she makes back to every community she performs. Ten percent of the net proceeds from the sale of the "Drive a Tractor" merchandise will be donated. The merchandise is items such as caps and key fobs.

Morgan moved to Kansas City when she was 10 and currently lives there although her heart remains in the cotton farms and gently rolling hills of Arkansas. She went to college in Arkansas as well.

"I love. It's beautiful," she said. However, two years ago, she made the permanent move to Kansas City where there is a music scene.

You can't take the country out of the girl, and when she walks on stage, when the nerves hit, her southern Arkansas drawl "gets 10 times worse," Morgan says.

"They say when you get on stage, it should be you times two," Morgan said laughing. "I'm like nervous me times two."

"You have to just get out there and do it," she said. "And hope the crowd's nice."

Morgan's parents inspired her love of music. Her daddy is a gifted singer, her mom can play anything on the piano,



and her grandmother plays the organ. "They gave it all to me," she sings in her charming song, "Never Been to Nashville."

Growing up, there was always music of all different kinds in the home. She started singing when she was young. She played in band all of the way through high school and college.

So far, her "Drive a Tractor," has been her most popular along with "Never Been to Nashville." Although Morgan has never been trained in song writing, the song was written in just a few minutes. In college, she studied Bible and Theology.

Morgan plays saxophone, guitar, piano, and can play anything with strings or keys she can play.

Her ideas for her songs come from everyday life.

"Sometimes its things people say," Morgan said. "Sometimes it's a situation. "It's always different."

Morgan's big break came from a connection from a church she went to in Kansas City. The worship pastor had played in a rock and roll band, and Morgan played a song for him one night.

"He said, hey we should record that," Morgan said. "We recorded 13 songs."

It all stems back to that, she said, with one thing leading to another. Morgan has stayed busy singing concerts and writing since August 2015.

"It's a whole lot of little things that lead up to big things," she said. "It's not like you have one moment."

Morgan definitely doesn't take herself too seriously.

"I just write silly songs and play them," she said, laughing. "I'm amazed I've ended up where I've ended up."

She said if her songs make people happy, that's cool.

"It's not anything more or less than that."

Another full slate scheduled for 2016 After Harvest Festival

BY MIKE COURSON

It's here! Thursday, July 14 will kick off the 43rd Annual After Harvest Festival in Ellinwood. A full weekend of activities will wrap up in the wee hours of Sunday morning.

Fun begins Thursday morning at the city pool with the pool Olympics from 10 a.m. to noon. Free snow cones will also be offered during the pool Olympics.

After an afternoon off, activities resume with the community barbecue from 5-7 p.m. in the city park. The Ellinwood High School Eagle Spirit Squad and Future Eagle cheer squads will perform. The homemade ice cream social will also run from 5-7 p.m.

The music begins at 6:30 p.m. Thursday with country artist Sara Morgan playing in the park until 8 p.m. The outdoor beer garden will run from 5 p.m. to midnight in the park.

There are plenty of late-night activities Thursday. Opening night is wristband night at the carnival from 7-11 p.m. The Underground Saloon at the Wolf Hotel will be open from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m., and Space Madness will highlight a dance at the American Legion from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

AHF activities begin early Friday morning with the pancake feed in Wolf Park from 7-10 a.m. Underground tunnel tours begin at 11 a.m., as does Wolfstone Ice Cream at the Wolf Hotel.

The city park will be the site of another dance with Atomic Fireflies and Rice County Line performing from 5 p.m. to midnight. The beer garden will also be open during those hours. Friday is again wristband night at the carnival from 7-11 p.m.

The Wolf Hotel will host



Ellinwood's Clayton Davis made it all the way to nationals after winning the tractor pull at the 2015 AHF.

(photo by Mike Courson)

a comedy show from 8-10 p.m., and the Underground Saloon will be open from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. Breakfast will be served in the saloon from midnight until 2 a.m.

Saturday's festivities open with the Family Fun Walk and 5K run at 7 a.m. The 39th Annual Fishing Derby kicks off at 7:30 a.m. at Wolf Pond and lasts until 9:30 a.m.

A 3-on-3 basketball tournament returns to the After Harvest Festival with first tip at 9 a.m. at the city park. Line-up for the Rotary AHF Parade also begins at 9 a.m. The Kids' Parade begins at 9:30 with the big parade to follow at 10 a.m.

The Family Fun Fair will run from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Wolf Park, and the horse-shoe tournament begins at 11 a.m. near Wolf Pond.

Food and drinks will be available around town Saturday afternoon. The American Legion will be open, and Kansas Sidewinders MC will host an indoor beer garden from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 21 N. Main. Lone Wolf Restaurant will have its whole hog buffet from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 106 N. Main. Wolfstone Ice Cream

will again be available at the Wolf Hotel from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Kids can participate in the tractor pull starting at noon. The watermelon-eating contest is also scheduled for noon. Both events take place at Wolf Park.

Afternoon activities come to a close with the golf tournament starting at 1 p.m., and the Ellinwood Fire Department Duck Run starting at 2:30 p.m. Ellinwood Tunnel Tours will be available throughout the day.

Evening activities begin with the 'Go NUTS' all you can eat buffet at Annie Mae's from 5-8 p.m. at 518 E. Santa Fe.

The outdoor beer garden begins at 5 p.m. and runs to midnight. Wristbands will again be available at the carnival from 7-11 p.m.

Saturday's activities come to a head with a performance by Homebrew from 8 p.m. to midnight in the city park.

The Wolf Hotel will be open from 8 p.m. with a comedy show, the Underground Saloon, and breakfast, which begins at midnight and lasts until 2 a.m.

Welcome to the Annual After Harvest Festival

Hope you have a great time!



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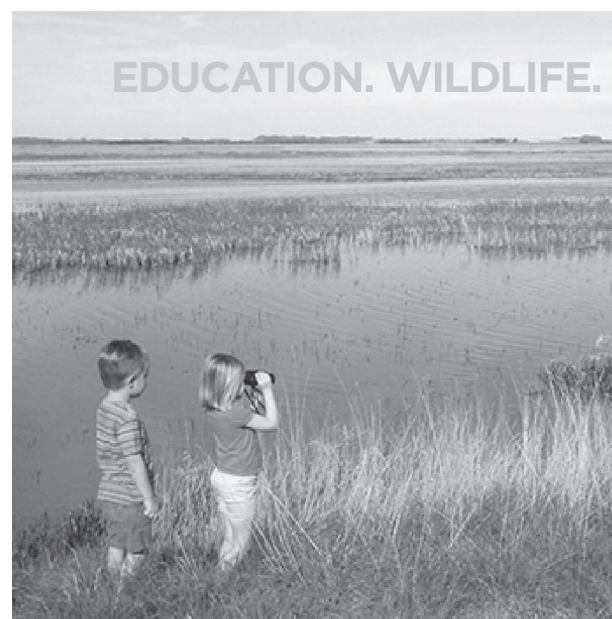
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