



SCARY MONSTERS YOUth Rally Wrap-Up by Tony Wade

Nearly twenty members of our congregation including young people, their friends and chaperones, attended the 16th annual Scary Monsters YOUth Rally last weekend in Martinez. The theme this year was “The Fallen” (Romans 3:23). The event was started in 1995 by Ray Lawson (then the youth minister, now an elder) of the Martinez church of Christ.

“I came across some material from a youth rally Martinez had hosted back in 1991 in the month of October,” Lawson said. “That got me to reminiscing about how there used to be so many rallies in the summer, but not too many in the fall. Then I got to thinking about Jeremiah 6:15 that talks of God’s people not knowing how to blush because they were hardened by the world. The world celebrates

“monsters” at this time of year, but there’s a real monster out there that is alive and well. Yet we seem to be too comfortable with him. We need to know how to combat him – not tolerate him! Thus “SCARY MONSTERS” YOUth Rally was born.”

According to Lawson the first event was just “thrown together” and they hoped to get at least 100 kids. They got nearly double that.

“We had around 175, give or take. With each year the Lord blessed us as more and more started coming. We peaked in 2001 with 410. Things have leveled off to a more manageable number and we average around 325.” This year approximately 320 kids showed up.”



We arrived Friday night and sang praise songs and enjoyed the first of many lessons from speaker Eli Hooper who broke down the Word of God so well. I mean, he told the story of David and Goliath—a tale so familiar that even non-Christians know it—and he made it fresh, new, funny, exciting and relevant.

The teens then were sent to the host homes they were assigned to. The fellows who I chaperoned were all housed by Deacon John Huie and his wife Laura who were gracious enough last year to put us up as well.



Saturday began with a scrumptious pancake breakfast, some praise and a lesson by Eli. Then the carnival began which featured inflatable fun stations like boxing, jousting and many others. Lunch was served and then later treats like cotton candy, funnel cakes and watermelon were offered up.

That afternoon there was more praise, more feeding from God’s word and a wonderful Christian illusionists who was talented funny and inspirational. Dinner (yes, we ate a lot) was tri-tip or

teriyaki chicken and was followed by a concert from Pepperdine University's famed traveling singing group Won By One. After the concert, the auditorium lights were dimmed and we sang songs of praise before calling it a night.

Sunday started with pancakes, praise and more Eli delivering the Word of the Lord. Worship followed.

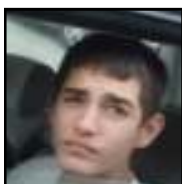


What struck me was how seamless the event flowed. I know that a lot of planning and footwork went into pulling it off. It was truly a blessing. In fact, the only negative thing about the whole weekend was Ray Lawson's "locusts and wild honey"-esque assertion that putting ranch dressing on a corn dog was a taste sensation. I forgave him as scripture says I must. Here are some testimonials from others who made the trip this year:



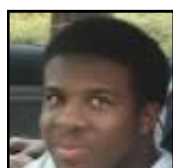
Jocelyn Johnston: "My first year at scary monsters was AMAZING! I had a lot of fun. But I'd have to say listening to Eli's lessons was my favorite part. He kept me so interested in what he was teaching. OH! and the carnival was great!"

Kaci Wade: "I really liked the last part of Saturday night when Won by One performed and we had the devotional. It was a nice way to wrap things up. But yeah, the entire thing was amazing."



Joey Niccum: "Scary Monsters was a blast. The worship was great, and it was a nice treat to have a concert of Won by One. Also I loved the carnival part of it, the boxing arena had to of been my favorite activity of the numerous activities offered."

Yolanda Reed: "My favorite part was seeing the 300+ teenagers who were all there to worship God! It was an amazing sight to see. It brought joy and hope to my heart. I also really enjoyed the guest speakers. They were funny but at the same time VERY serious about their message regarding our Lord and savior Jesus."



Jeremy Grant: "My favorite part of Scary Monsters was the song worship. We didn't know the songs the first day, but by Sunday I knew them all. They had a variety of songs and many I was hoping we could learn them at our church."

Josh Niccum: "This was my first year going to Scary Monsters and it was great. Every aspect of it was good; from meeting other Christian teenagers to listening to wonderful, engaging messages. I can't wait to go next year."

