

Gospel cruise offers clean entertainment alternative

Continued from page 4B
wants the experience.

"My cousin is not into church," explained Rushing. "You get the preacher Sunday morning. This is just a place to enjoy music, network, and bring someone not saved to

interact with the singles ministry."

Rushing and Harper are currently paying for everything out of their own pockets, providing food both through catering and home cooking. "It was hard at first,"

said Rushing, "but now we have it down to a science."

Rushing, an Olympic High School alum, and Harper, a North Mecklenburg alum, met in church. They are hoping it is with churches that they can further develop

cruises through sponsorship.

"If you allow us to serve you, then a percentage of the profits go back to the church," said Harper.

"Currently the dance ministry, soloists, and sax players are willing to do this without being compensated," said Rushing. "We will provide this as long as God keeps blessing us financially, until it catches on."

The goal is to offer a cruise

every Sunday, but right now the programs is offered once a month.

"Initially, we planned to bless two people, per event, with tickets to the Gospel Cruise from various agencies," explained Harper. "We have contacted the Battered Women's Shelter in an effort to sponsor two ladies on our upcoming event. God has blessed us so that we can bless others."

For tickets, call (704) 806-0592 or by email Rushing at arushing@sprintpcs.com. The ticket price includes a grab bag, and giveaways onboard have been gift cards, gas cards, and Bible CDs. T-Rush Entertainment's next cruise will feature Christian comedy.

Pagan religion gaining popularity

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

STAUNTON, Va. — A pagan religion that some experts say can be interpreted as encouraging violence is gaining popularity among prison inmates, one of whom is scheduled to be executed this week for killing a fellow prisoner at the foot of an altar.

Michael Lenz is scheduled to die Thursday for the death of Brent Parker, who was stabbed dozens of times at Augusta Correctional Center during a gathering of inmates devoted to Asatru, whose followers worship Norse gods. At his trial, Lenz testified that Parker had not been taking the religion seriously and had to die to protect the honor of the gods.

Other followers call the religion misunderstood and say most adherent inmates do not use it to further violent agendas. Asatru has been gaining popularity among inmates, say

religious leaders and prison experts who believe its roots in Viking mythology attract prisoners seeking power, protection and unity.

The gang culture in prison also contributes, said theologian Britt Minshall, a former police officer and Baltimore pastor who ministers to inmates. Some white inmates who felt threatened by black prison gangs formed their own gangs and sought out a belief system they felt would provide additional security, he said.

"It's a way of grouping together for safety," he said. "And you have to have a god in the middle of that to really keep you safe."

Asatru is often referred to as Odinism, although some followers believe the two are separate religions. It is a polytheistic, pre-Christian faith native to Scandinavia whose adherents worship gods including Thor and Odin.

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CONFERENCE LECTURERS

 Thurs. - Fri. Aug. 10-11 - 6:30pm Bishop Phillip Davis New Apostolic Church Charlotte, NC	 Sat. Aug. 12th - 9:00am Pastor Karen Woods New Creation Christian Church Charlotte, NC
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YOUTH SPEAKERS

 Wed. Aug. 9th - 7:30pm Pastor William Murphy III The Dream Center Church Atlanta, GA	 Thurs. Aug. 10th - 7:30pm Pastor Christopher J. Harrell Cedar Grove Tabernacle of Praise Greensboro, NC
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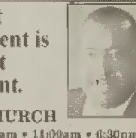
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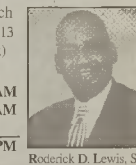
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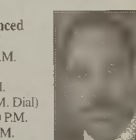
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