

Bill Kirby Jr.: Help these ducks get their feet wet

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Have ducks ... will sell.

"We have sold more than 5,300 ducks," says Johnny Wilson, executive director of Fayetteville Urban Ministry, which is sponsoring its fifth annual Fayetteville Duck Derby on Sunday at the 33rd Fayetteville Dogwood Festival. "Our goal is to get 10,000 ducks adopted."

Wilson is confident.

"Yes, it is a lot of ducks left," he says. "We are optimistic in the fact that each of the past four years approximately 4,000 to 5,000 ducks were adopted in the final week. We are very hopeful that we can meet our goal."

Look, you need to adopt a duck, because they're driving me crazy.

Down here along Whitfield Street, with the newspaper offices on one side of the road and the ministry on the other, these quacking ducks are so eager to find an owner they're drowning out the Amtrak and the freight trains on the nearby CSX railroad tracks.

It's a quack here and a quack there. They're quacking all hours of the day in the ministry warehouse.

Blame it on Heather Craig, chairwoman of this year's derby committee, and apparently they ordered 10,000 ducks.

Which means, by my count, there are 4,700 ducks that can't wait to dip into Cross Creek down by Festival Park and race for the title.

A duck costs \$5.

Five ducks cost \$20. Twelve ducks go for \$50. Twenty-five ducks are \$100. You can purchase 130 ducks for \$500.

Grand prize

Now, if your duck wins the derby, you will be the grand prize winner of a 2015 Forest Wildwood travel trailer camper, courtesy of Camping World of Fayetteville. And, if you are present, you'll win \$150 in cash, too.

The second-place duck wins you a 65-inch flat screen television from the Walmart Distribution Center. The third-place duck wins you a set of tires, up to \$500, from Ed's Tires. The fourth-place duck wins a 12-month Renaissance European Day Spa membership. The fifth-place duck is worth a \$250 grocery shopping gift card.

There's a consolation prize for the duck that crosses the finish line last: a camping tent, and so help me, a jar of molasses.

Group's largest fundraiser

"The Fayetteville Duck Derby is extremely important to Fayetteville Urban Ministry as it is their largest fundraiser of the year," Craig says. "It supports not only Fayetteville Urban Ministry, but 40 additional local nonprofits to include Special Olympics, local schools, child advocacy, veterans, animal protection and Relay for Life. We're confident we'll sell out, so everyone should get their 'ducks in a row' if they hope to have a chance to win."

You can adopt a duck at the ministry's website at fayettevilleduckderby.com, by calling 483-5944 or at the ministry office at 701 Whitfield St. from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. today and Thursday, and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday.

And, Wilson says, the ministry will sell ducks until an hour before the 4 p.m. derby.

"The derby is a fun event the community has embraced," says Ken Lancaster, the ministry's board president. "And hopefully will continue to do so."

Bill Kirby can be reached at kirbyb@fayobserver.com or 323-4848, ext. 486.

