

December 2006

## AfterDark Alternative

Bethany Porter  
*Iowa State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos>

---

### Recommended Citation

Porter, Bethany (2006) "AfterDark Alternative," *Ethos*: Vol. 2007 , Article 6.  
Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos/vol2007/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ethos by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [digirep@iastate.edu](mailto:digirep@iastate.edu).



# AfterDark Alternative

Story: Bethany Porter  
Photos: Seth Walters

ISU AfterDark boasts free prizes and food for students looking for weekend options.

Excited laughter and joking fill the Sun Room of the Memorial Union as groups of friends grab piles of free food and fill the round tables set up around the room. As the announcer begins to call out numbers, a hush falls over the rambunctious crowd. He calls out numbers rapid-fire, barely stopping to breathe and continues until a sudden cry erupts from the crowd: "BINGO!" A mixture of disappointed groans and excited shouts erupts from all directions as a volunteer confirms the bingo and presents the winner with a prize. It's Halloween weekend, and the crowd of about 200 is smaller than usual. Nevertheless, the game continues, the prizes get larger with every winner and snickers fill the air each time the announcer happens to call "O-69."

Over the last four years, scenes like this have become an increasing presence on campus. What began as gatherings of 80 to 120 people has expanded to crowds of 300 to 550. With the promise of prizes and an array of activities, these are no ordinary student social affairs.

## Play for prizes

ISU AfterDark is a unique organization on campus that attempts to cater to the desires of students who are craving something new to do on the weekends.

Events such as Bingo boast not only free food but also an array of expensive prizes just waiting for an enthusiastic player to grab them. Past prizes include iPod nanos, iPod shuffles, digital cameras, grills, \$200 gift cards to Hy-Vee, gift cards to Target and Best Buy, televisions, refrigerators, blankets and a slew of smaller prizes.

Since the group began, the number of members has grown to include 14 students and two staff advisers. The student officers

“You meet new people and the atmosphere is fun.”  
— Katy Fiedler, sophomore

work closely with advisers to plan and publicize events.

The group began holding one event every month in 2002. As the events' popularity grew, so did their frequency. There is now an ISU AfterDark activity every Friday night.

The most popular event is Bingo night, which draws an average crowd of 500 students, says Kerri Roesner, co-adviser for ISU AfterDark and Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention Program Assistant.

“My favorite event is Bingo. You get a chance to sit down with your friends and talk. You meet new people and the atmosphere is fun, not to mention the prizes, of course — absolutely amazing prizes,” says Katy Fiedler, a sophomore in mechanical engineering and a frequent attendee of ISU AfterDark events.

Students have varying reasons for attending the AfterDark activities. While most students agree that it's nice to have something different to do on the weekends, others come for the free goods.

“I came mostly to win prizes,” says Molly Grisham, a junior in materials engineering who attended the Halloween Bingo event on Oct. 27.

Many of the students who attend Bingo find themselves coming back for more events.

“I love Bingo night. You get stuff for free. I haven't missed a Bingo [night] since last year,” says Anasia Sturdivant, a freshman in biology.

Students who attend the popular Bingo nights often participate in other ISU AfterDark events as well.

“I like Casino nights better than Bingo. There's more chance for conversation with friends since you don't have to listen for numbers. I like to play blackjack on those nights,” says Molly Reid, a senior in electrical engineering.

Aside from Bingo and Casino nights, ISU AfterDark offers bowling, craft nights and ice-skating. These events bring in anywhere from 150 to 350 students. When the weather permits, there are outdoor movies that draw

larger crowds of around 400 people.

Late Night at Lied Rec is another crowd pleaser which draws an average of 400 attendees. On these nights the Lied Recreation Center is outfitted with inflatables, make-your-own-music-video stations and virtual reality stations. There is also rock-climbing and, of course, free food.

## Copycatting

ISU AfterDark began in 2002 when a letter was sent to all the Big XII student affairs administrators requesting their presence at the Big XII Conference on late-night programming. The conference was created to discuss options for programming on college campuses during the weekend which would provide students with an alternative to parties, the bar scene or trips home every weekend for lack of things to do.

Sara Kellogg, co-adviser to ISU AfterDark and the Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention Program Coordinator, was asked to accompany a group of ISU staff members from the residence halls, Thielen Student Health Center and the Office of Student Affairs to the University of Missouri-Columbia for the conference.

The conference highlighted “WVUp All Night” a program offered at West Virginia University as an alternative to the bar and party scene. The program runs from Thursday to Saturday night and includes pool, movies, comedy acts, bowling and more. Attendance at the events is around 4,000 students per night.



The conference also included information about "Gator Nights," the University of Florida's answer to alternative weekend programming. Gator Nights emerged in 2000 after staff from Florida's Student Activities office attended WVU's All Night. With 1,800 students in attendance on its inaugural weekend, Gator Nights grew rapidly. Programming for Gator Nights now includes movies, comedians, bands, dances, cultural events, lectures and tournaments.

After returning to Iowa State, the group who attended the conference began surveying student leaders to see what they wanted to do on weekends. Four students expressed interest in starting a group similar to those at West Virginia and Florida, and ISU AfterDark was born.

Although the founders had a lot of ideas from the conference, they have been diligent about keeping programming in line with what has been most popular with students.

"At the beginning they looked at Gator Nights and West Virginia. But since we've started, we've come up with what we're doing and we haven't looked at other campuses ... we look at what works here and run with that," Roesner says.

## Not about sobriety?

ISU AfterDark inhabits a strange middle ground where alcohol is concerned. Although the events are alcohol-free and promoted as alternatives to bars and parties, the group's leadership explained the focus is not on that aspect of events.

"The group is not an anti-drinking group; the students involved do not take any particular stance on drinking, and we don't ask them to. The main goal for ISU AfterDark is to provide some options for students on the weekends," Kellogg says.

Maria Witte, senior in graphic design and president of ISU AfterDark, worries about the perception some students

have of the group. She believes they may focus on the non-alcoholic aspect of the event and miss out on the fun.

"We try not to focus on the fact that the events are alcohol-free. That's not the point of having events; it's an alternative. We're not trying to stop drinking or make students reconsider drinking. ISU AfterDark is something to do if you don't feel like getting dressed up and going out drinking," Witte says.

Despite the hesitancy of some students to try out the events, Witte said that many times when someone goes to one event, "most people always come back to more."

Students at the Halloween Bingo event seemed oblivious to the lack of alcohol. Some explained that the majority of the people they knew were at the event so they had no need to go



party-hopping. Others were ambivalent about the issue.

"I don't care either way if there's drinking or not," Reida says.

A few students approached the idea of an alcohol-free environment with a more humorous attitude.

"I like the events; they keep us out of trouble. And we get in a lot of trouble," says Rosa Avelar, a sophomore in hotel, restaurant and institution management.

Despite the lack of focus on alcohol, ISU AfterDark does receive some of its funding from the Thielen Student Health Center through the Substance Abuse Prevention Department (SAP). Funding is split between various substance abuse prevention activities.

"SAP ... chooses to fund ISU AfterDark because after meeting with students and staff, it was determined there was not really anything else like this on campus that happened on such a regular basis, and students seemed to be looking for other things to do," Kellogg says.

ISU AfterDark receives some funding based on answers to questions on a survey students fill out at the end of each event that includes questions such as, "How likely is it that if you were not at this event, you would be at a party or drinking alcohol?"

## Survey says

For those students unfazed by the lack of alcohol at Bingo and other events, ISU AfterDark provides a welcome break from the usual weekend routine.

"It's a good option so that people don't feel like parties are the only thing to do," Fiedler says.

The biggest challenge the group seems to face is getting the word out about events.

"I think it's a great organization ... I just don't think a lot of people know about the events," says Meredith Ellis, a senior in graphic design and the longest member of the group.

Many students admit knowing next to nothing about ISU AfterDark.

"I've honestly never heard of ISU AfterDark," says Olivia Maiers, a junior in pre-journalism and mass communication. "The events sound interesting now that I know what it is, though."

Some students are vaguely aware of the organization's existence but have never attended an event.

"I guess I knew about the events but I never see any posters or advertisements for specific activities," says Amanda Crawford, a junior in journalism and mass communication.

Despite the organization's attempts to advertise using posters, advertisements in the Iowa State Daily and table tents at dining centers, the coordinators believe most publicity seems to come by word of mouth.

Although most reactions to the group are positive, skeptics remain.

"I've never gone to ISU AfterDark because none of the activities really appeal to me. Most of them seem to be activities where you sit and socialize, but I sit in class all day. I would attend something more active, like if they had dancing or a big game of capture the flag," says Morgan O'Dell, a junior in psychology.

Although the student leaders are responsible for helping with new ideas for events, the schedule for each semester is determined the semester before.

"We've tried to do campus-wide things like playing tag or something, but that doesn't always work out. It's too hard to organize," Ellis says.

For now, the group promotes the prizes and sticks events that have been popular with students.

"We've had a lot of response with Bingo so we try to do that once a month," Ellis says. "The events are a lot of fun — they're free and fun, you can't beat that, especially when you're winning an iPod." e



# midnight munchies

Story: Maria Schwamman Photos: Rob Vidimos

You're hungry and it's late. You see a food stand so you dig through your pockets and find \$4. Jackpot. You might not remember what you ate when you wake up in the morning, but the food will have its effect on you. Here's a look at the (not so) nutritional facts from your favorite snacks.

448  
calories



## the gyro

**Ingredients:** Pita bread, Lamb, feta cheese, tomatoes, onions, Tzatziki sauce

**Fat:** 14.86 g **Carbohydrates:** 52.24 g

**Sodium:** 1011.95 mg **Cholesterol:** 70.19 mg

**Protein:** 25.38 g

\*Nutrition facts estimated using fitday.com

**Ingredients:** bread, mozzarella, margarine, seasonings (three slices)

**Fat:** 11.92 g **Carbohydrates:** 56.14 g

**Sodium:** 538.59 mg **Cholesterol:** 11.48 mg

**Protein:** 5.29 g

\*Nutrition facts estimated using fitday.com



173  
calories

## the cheesy breadsticks

**Ingredients:** : tomato tortilla, chicken, black beans, white rice, Monterrey Jack, sour cream, chipotle tomatoes, lettuce

**Fat:** 34.84 g **Carbohydrates:** 122.044 g

**Sodium:** 2835.72 mg **Cholesterol:** 119.21 mg

**Protein:** 43.64 g

\*Nutrition facts estimated using fitday.com

989  
calories

## the burrito



**Ingredients:** Taco shell, seasoned shredded beef, sour cream, lettuce, tomatoes, onion, cilantro

**Fat:** 25.75 g **Carbohydrates:** 17.12 g  
**Sodium:** 376.6 mg **Cholesterol:** 113.48 mg  
**Protein:** 21.8 g

\*Nutrition facts estimated using fitday.com



## the beef taco

511  
calories

# the | count

713  
calories



## the chicken caesar pita

**Ingredients:** Pita bread, chicken, bacon, tomato, onion, cheddar, Caesar dressing

**Fat:** 27.7 g **Carbohydrates:** 61.5 g  
**Sodium:** 1377.2 mg **Cholesterol:** 44.3 mg  
**Protein:** 52.9 g

\*Nutrition facts from pitapit.com

**Ingredients:** Hot dog bun, hot dog, bacon, chips, pineapple, cheese, onions, ketchup, mustard, chips

**Fat:** 33.82 g **Carbohydrates:** 43.06 g  
**Sodium:** 474.29 mg **Cholesterol:** 52.49 mg  
**Protein:** 19.13 g

\*Nutrition facts estimated using fitday.com

## the loaded hot dog



420  
calories

## the turkey sub

554  
calories



**Ingredients:** French bread, turkey breast, alfalfa sprouts, lettuce, tomato and Hellman's Mayonnaise (Turkey Tom)

**Fat:** 26.005 g **Carbohydrates:** 53.813 g  
**Sodium:** 1341.608 mg **Cholesterol:** 48.394 mg  
**Protein:** 24.166 g

\*Nutrition facts from jimmyjohns.com