

‘I never stopped playing cowboy’

Wild West show brings action, fun to Warren County fair

By Laura Ruby
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Andy Rotz has wanted to be a cowboy for as long as he can remember.

Rotz, 38, is living his dream, traveling the East Coast offering an action-packed Wild West variety show as Cowboy Andy. He is at the Warren County Fair through Saturday, offering two shows nightly at 6:30 and 9 p.m.

Rotz grew up in Hagerstown, Maryland, where his parents ran a summer day camp for kids called Antietam Recreation and his grandparents kept horses.

“I’ve been doing this since I was a kid. I grew up watching cowboy movies so I just ended up playing cowboy for the rest of my life. I never stopped playing cowboy,” he laughed.

As part of the recreation company, Rotz’s family also offers shows through Antietam Entertainment. Rotz, who is performing now with Lexi Kriner of Hagerstown as his assistant, began the mobile show in 2017 and travels from New York to Florida throughout the year.

Rotz honed his skills — highlighted throughout the show with dramatic music and lights — by working with authentic cowboys. As a kid he learned lassoing from a rodeo rider and then fell in love with trick roping, rope spinning, and whip cracking when he met Cowboy Lee Homiki, who became his mentor.

In the entertainment industry for more than 20 years, Rotz is the Guinness world record holder for the most Texas skips and a fast draw world champion, according to his website.

The jam-packed 20-minute show features rope skills, gun spinning, singing, dancing, fire play, audience participation and dog tricks.

The dogs — Bandit the border collie, Blaze the Belgian malinois, and Nova the goldendoodle — steal the show, Rotz said.

Bandit jumps effortlessly through a ring of fire. Blaze, who lost a leg in a freak car accident as a pup, shows off her speed as she chases kids on stick horses to pop balloons that are trailing behind them. Nova is still a pup so she shows up to meet audience members after the show.

“They kind of come in the show a couple of times. It’s not really a dog show, but they steal the show every time,” Rotz said, noting that audience members often ask to have their pictures taken with the dogs following the show.

“It’s very humbling,” said Kriner, who met Rotz as a kid when she attended summer camp at his parent’s facility.

Kriner, who has a dance background, also performs in Antietam Entertainment shows. In the mobile show, she plays the role of Lindsay Leigh, serving as emcee and helping to build excitement for Rotz’s tricks. She sings and dances a bit — and has knives thrown at her.

“I trust him. I grew up with him. I’ve seen him do it like hundreds of times. It’s kind of normal to me now,” she said about the portion of the act where she is attached to a spinning wheel and knives alit with fire are thrown around her body.

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Photos by Rich Cooley/Daily

Andy Rotz of Hagerstown, Maryland, ropes a group of spectators during his Cowboy Andy show at the Warren County Fair earlier this week.



Andy Rotz juggles a pair of revolvers during the show.



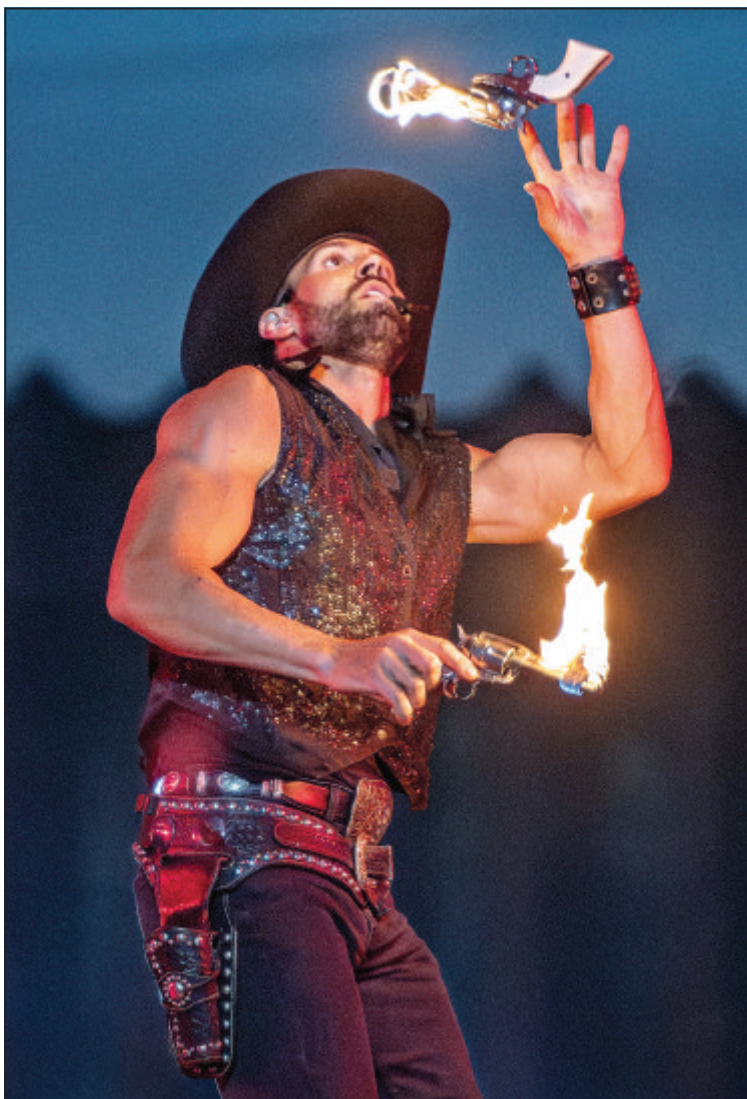
Andrew Roth, left, and Lexi Kriner, right, are silhouetted on a platform as their evening show comes to an end.



Andy Rotz performs with flaming ropes.



Andy Rotz spins a rope of fire while perched on a unicycle.



Andy Rotz introduces fire into his revolver juggling act.



Andy Rotz performs a rope trick.