

Shelter people describe their lives

by Mardell Griffin

A small group of men stood in the rain in the dark outside the door. Occasionally, a foot slapped against the wet concrete in a vain effort to keep warm.

The door partially opened, allowing a rectangle of light to fall on weather-worn faces. All heads turned toward the door.

"Three more," said Ann Davies, a church volunteer, from inside the building.

The three men nearest the door slipped inside and stood, dripping water onto the carpet in the warm room.

"Any weapons or alcohol?" asked Joan Crew as Davies searched the men.

"Are these allowed?" asked Davies as she pulled a razor out of a pocket.

"No," said Crew, "someone could be hurt with that. Put it in an envelope with his name on it and he can get it back on his way out in the morning."

Eventually the two women processed the rest of the men standing outside the door. The same procedure is followed each night for an average of 80 street people who stay at the Urban Ministry's night shelter at 305 Asheboro St.

Crew and Dave Harris are the only paid staff members of the night shelter. They rotate every third night, man-

ning the door, directing volunteers and keeping the peace.

"We have up to 115 people in here on cold nights," said Harris. "Thirty-five percent are mental cases and 50 to 60 percent are alcoholics. Some people overlap into both groups. We couldn't function without volunteers."

The three large rooms open to shelter residents filled with people. They milled around, watched television, smoked, played cards and talked. They emptied trays of sandwiches and cups of coffee. Some of them lay on floor mats that lined the walls of the largest room of the former grocery store. They slept amid the noise, smoke and smell.

The shelter residents range in age from late teens to the 60's. Their backgrounds vary from orphanages to stable middle-class homes. Their level of education is from elementary school to college graduate school.

"The shelter covers a bigger cross section of the community than I expected," said Clarence Rains, 31, a court-appointed volunteer. "My eighth-grade science teacher is living here."

But records compiled and analyzed by Urban Ministry staff showed some similarities in shelter residents. Marilyn Cirulis, associate direc-

tor of housing for Urban Ministry, said, "In Greensboro the average street person is black, male, 18 to 34 years old with less than one year of employment and less than a high school education. He is the middle child of living parents that are divorced or separated.

"He is in good physical health, abuses alcohol, has no source of income and has been arrested one or more times for minor violations of the law, usually alcohol-related."

On Feb. 12, the 86 people seemed far from the norm. They included men and women, black and white, drunk and sober.

One well-dressed young man sat at the card table.

"He's scared to death," said a staff member. "He's from an affluent family. His mother dropped him off here tonight because of discipline problems at home."

Walter Wooten Jr., 60, a 1948 graduate of A&T with a master's degree in agricultural science has been staying at the shelter since late January.

"I was a county agricultural agent for 16 years," said Wooten. "I worked in Philadelphia in pharmaceuticals, testing drugs on animals before use on humans. I taught science at Lincoln Jr. High in '66 and '67. I worked at A&T as supervisor in housekeeping. I left A&T in

1983. I had alcohol problems on all my jobs. I've been The Crawford Center.

"I still drink but haven't been what I'd call high in eight months. I don't think alcohol will be a problem on a job now."

Wooten plans to prepare income tax statements for local residents, then move to his parents' farm in Bladen County.

"The shelter is a wonderful place for people who need it. People don't appreciate it. They don't want rules and regulations," Wooten said. "Some people here are slow. I wish I wasn't here under the circumstances but I have learned a lot.

"Most of these people feel inferior but try to act superior. Two-thirds have been in jail, and half of those are going back. They have no respect for authority or themselves."

John Reeves, 36, has been coming to the shelter for four months.

"I went to high school, then to Ohio State. I didn't finish college. I was married to a Bennett College graduate. I'm divorced now," Reeves said. "I'm looking for a job. It's like a merry-go-round, look for work, then back to the shelter. I need a break to stop the merry-go-round."

"There's one sure way off the merry-go-round," he said

with his head down and voice lowered, "suicide."

Donald Bryan Fairbanks, 25, has a different outlook. He has been participating in an adult education program at the shelter since last September.

"I should be ready to take the GED exam in March," said Fairbanks. "I would like to go on to two years of junior college and two years of regular college to study electronics and computers. My favorite subject is poetry. I write some, too."

The following is one of his poems:

STREET PEOPLE

We who walks all day
And sometimes at night,
Live very different from the
home body type.
We stay inside shelters, some
sleep on the street.
Some find spots that's warm and
neat.
But we are known as people with
names
Like creeps, unknown freaks, and
alien cheats,
The kind others don't want
to meet.
Why, we're just the same with
modern names
That just lost jobs and other good
things.
So don't put us out, don't put us
down.
We just need a warm place
to rest and a shelter to
Lay our head
Down

Singer delights audience

by Yolanda Lloyd

Picture the stage in the Little Theatre with the lights shining dimly on the piano player, who is setting the mood with music from the late '30s.

A striking figure appears at the right side of the curtain. "Who's that lady, James Ray?" someone asks.

She's dressed in a pink silk, short-sleeved blouse and black silk skirt with matching pumps.

Everyone knew who the real Zoe Walker was by the time the show had ended. In the beginning, they may have only known her name; then, they learned about her talent.

From her first song, "Won't You Come Home?", to the final number, Walker captured the audience with her charm and charisma. Her performance included ragtime songs, rhythm-and-blues and contemporary tunes, all of which enthralled the crowd.

The brassy lady enjoyed

herself. Once, when she put on a pink hat made in the early '40s, white gloves and a white, feathered shawl, she said, "You like that part, don't you?" The audience laughed and wanted more.

Walker's show had intimacy. She sang as if the theater contained only her and someone else instead of a crowd of eager fans. Her performing seemed spontaneous, and yet she practiced hard.

"It depends on the song," says Walker. "I figure it out when I rehearse — what it means to me—and I try to interpret that to the audience."

One of the most successful moments in the show came when Walker relived her first audition. She revealed a sparkling black dress with spaghetti straps that she wore under her costume. Of course, the first audition was nervous and clumsy. This remembrance allowed the audience to see the humorous as well as the serious side of her character.

Walker, 29, has been performing for more than 14 years. Her interest in "showbiz" began in Nashville, Tenn. when she attended Miss Wanda's Tap School. After working in Children's Theater and community plays, she studied drama and dance at the University of Tennessee. She went to New York and worked her way into various productions.

"I always wanted to do things that showed women in a strong, positive light," said Walker, who has been inspired by Aretha Franklin, Cicely Tyson and Stevie Wonder.

Her show drew raves from the audience.

"The performance was magnificent. I especially enjoyed her mannerisms, the way she came over to the crowd," said junior Tina Morrison.

"Excellent, excellent, excellent," observed Dr. Phyllis Forte Ethridge, dean of women. "Very professionally done from beginning to end."

Black National Anthem redone by famous entertainers

MILWAUKEE — A group of America's most gifted and respected entertainers have "lifted their voices" in a stirring, emotional musical tribute to the heritage and traditions of black America.

Singers Deniece Williams, Al Green, Melba Moore, Roberta Flack and Patti Austin are featured on a new recording of a song often referred to as the "Black National Anthem." Narration is by accomplished actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee.

The song — "Lift Every Voice and Sing" — was written by noted black poet and civil rights leader James Weldon Johnson and was originally set to music by his brother, Jay Johnson, actor-musician.

The anthem is often sung

at public gatherings although the last known recording of the song reportedly was made at least 25 years ago.

This latest rendition of the anthem, with arrangements by Leon Pendarvis, is being distributed to selected radio stations across the United States by Lite beer from Miller for airing during Black History Month.

The concept for the special recording was developed by Mingo - Jones Advertising, New York, for the Miller Brewing Company.

"The anthem is about faith, hope and, above all, the pride and dignity of a people," said Barry Barrett, Lite brand manager.

"Like the spirituals which are so much a part of America's diverse culture, the message of the anthem is

universal," he added.

The lyrics to the beautiful, yet powerful song are:

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of
liberty;

Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling
sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that
the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that
the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new
day begun

Let us march on till victory is won.

These lyrics have been incorporated into a full-color poster developed by Miller Lite to accompany the release of the recording.

Posters are available for \$2. from *Ebony*.

Haunting queries

by Karen Exum

In February, every student who used the stairs between the cafeteria and the post office passed one of the questions.

"What is your worth as a student, a woman and black?" and "What does sisterhood mean to you?" were the queries on the bulletin boards, and they attracted some stimulating answers.

"Achieving the best I possibly can as a black woman and a student is what I see as worthiness. Then using this achievement to help uplift other people — especially my people," responded junior Karen Fisher.

At first, answers were slow to accumulate because students didn't realize that they could write on the boards, but then the paper got covered fast.

The questions came from Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. after the SGA asked organizations to take a bulletin board for Black History Month. According to senior Linda Rivers, SGA vice president, the sorority hoped to encourage a stronger bond on campus through these questions, which ran Feb. 1-15.

Two other questions — "What is finer womanhood?" and "What is the perfect Belle?" — ran for the rest of the month.

The sorority's goal was to interest students in looking beyond membership in organizations and looking toward becoming a member of the Bennett family.

These questions furnished a good idea of what students feel about themselves and their peers.

One student saw a question in a religious light.

Junior Evelyn Fulmore wrote: "As a black, a woman and a student, I place a lot of worth/value on all three. In order to be the best I can be, I put a lot of time and effort into everything I do. In order to get the respect of

others, I know I must respect myself.

"I know that whatever I feel my worth is, my worth as a human being in the eyes of God is what really counts."

Peru—from pg. 2

Norma Cordero Martraza, a 12-year-old schoolgirl taken from her home at midnight last year, is among those last seen at the barracks.

You can help in the work to end human rights abuses in Peru by joining Amnesty International's worldwide campaign. Please write a courteous letter to President Belaunde,

- Expressing your concern about the increasing number of "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions in Peru, and
- Urging the government to adopt measures for halting these practices, and
- Calling for full inquiries into cases of "disappearances."

Letters may be sent to: President Fernando Belaunde Terry/Presidente de la Republica del Peru/Palacio de Gobierno/752 Av. Canaval Moreya/Pescaderia/Lima, Peru. Salutation is Dear President Belaunde.

You can increase the effect of your letter by sending a copy to: His Excellency Luis Marchand/Ambassador of the Republic of Peru/1700 Massachusetts Avenue NW/Washington, D. C. 20036.

Letters should be sent no later than March 31.

Emilie Trautmann

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