

Do you want to register?

by Shirley Hunter
Staff Writer

With the visit of former presidential nominee Jesse Jackson to the UNC-CH campus last week, the atmosphere at the University seems proper for last minute registration drives before the November elections.

But, for the second year in a row, the Black Greek Council and the Black Student Movement will add a unique twist to the idea of the voter registration drive. "Steppin for Votes"--combination black Greek step show-voter registration drive--will take place 5:30 p.m. Oct. 4 in the Carolina Union's Great Hall.

This year's program will feature the seven black Greek organizations on campus: Alpha Kappa Alpha, Alpha Phi Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta, Kappa Alpha Psi, Omega Psi Phi, Phi Beta Sigma and Zeta Phi Beta.

Last year's program featured the organizations stepping as a group while this year's program will have each group perform four steps, then steps together, Melody Barnes a BSM coordinator, said.

In addition, the problems with the Orange County voter registrars last year have been cleared up, according to Wyatt Closs, one of the BSM coordinators. He said that a delay in registering students occurred because the registrars don't bring enough registration forms.

He also said that not enough registrars came to register students. With the delay and too few registrars, the step show did not get started until late, to add to the problems, students who were supposed to be registering were watching the step show, Closs said.

Eighty people registered last year, he said. "We easily could have had 200 people registered."

"The chairman of the Orange County elections board made it very hard," he said. "She wasn't very cooperative."

Margaret Parker the elections board chairman, could not be reached for comment.

Fred Evans of the BSM said that the groups were working with Moses Carey, and active participant in local government, to avoid last year's problems. He said Carey was arranging to bring the registrars to Great Hall, and that the registration would take place before the step show as scheduled.

Evans and Barnes said that they would like 300 to 400 students to register, but Evans added, "We are just looking for a good number."

They said that the step show, despite its appeal, was secondary and the registration primary.

Barnes said that the show served as a jump-off point to stress the impor-

tance of everyone participation in the voting process. "It is one of the last chances people will have to register," she said. "We want to get to freshman and all the other students."

The voter registration deadline is Oct. 8.

Johnny Smith, BGC president, said, "There's always a large turnout for a step show, and it is a feasible way of getting students out" to register.

Evans added, "With the drawing card we have, it should be successful."

"There always a large turnout for a step show and its a feasible way of getting students out"

**to register
Johnny Smith
BGC President**



ODETTA with Black Ink Managing Editor,
Rhonda Hubbard
Photo by: Denise Moultrie

ODETTA

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sion," concludes Odetta. "If it weren't for the National Educational Television, people might think that I was dead. As a matter of fact, somebody came up to ...me and said, 'I thought you were dead!' " Here, she lets out a hearty laugh and says, "Not in this life," revealing her sense of humor.

But watching Odetta on stage performing her magic, all racial barriers seem to disappear. Jeffrey Pavac of the Colorado Transcript says that "Odetta's blackness is significant, indeed, the essential ingredient in her self-perception. She allows us to glory in her gift as if in her race. But she is not unique and enchanting because she is black; she is a queen of song because she is Odetta... Even the name Odetta transcends gender, nationality, and ethnicity."

Odetta does express hope for our nation, saying that "hopefully it (racism) will get better, and the nation will get better."

Another important aspect of an Odetta concert is the presence of children's songs. Although she has no children of her own, she says that children are very important to her. "I am a mamrid of children, I really owe little kids, and I often look at them and wonder what happened to us aduse all of us were that beautiful at one time. Just beautiful in spirit. I think that when I was little, it was too heavy and too serious, too much to learn. I think I make a better child now than I did when I was a kid."

"When I go into the childrens bit, it lightens me up. I love to tease and fool around, and flirt with them (the audience). I just let go, the lighter side of myself... the humorous sick of myself," she admits.

The stage presence that Odetta possesses is one that is true to her character. She talks with her audience, and establishes a rapport with them that enables her to enjoy herself on stage, as well as letting the audience relax by enlisting their help in sing alongs.

"Singing along with me is very important," says Odetta. Not only does the audience participate, but when she talks, she is able to get a response. She continues to say that there is something going on. My feeling is that the performer has to be quite a gambler. --Now I'm a terrible gambler, even if we were playing with match sticks. I don't want to lose my match sticks. But when it

comes to a faith in your music, and my perception, and the things that I would like to say and pass on, I have some kind of confidence there that I have in no other part of my life. It's a need to share and pass on."

"I have run into a couple of performances when someone will say" sing we didn't come to hear you talk!" As a general rule, speaking with her audience does work. But why shouldn't it? Hearing Odetta speak is like hearing Odetta sing, except the notes are not there. Her soothing tone is pleasant to listen to, and in a sense, the mere sound of her voice is just as musical and melodious as the notes that she actually sings.

To be sure that Odetta does not miss anything when she performs, she says that she is "fascinated with what makes up an audience. There are times when the audience is vital...you can **hear** people listening--it is charged. And then there are some audiences that are like throwing your music down a well, there is nothing coming back. Now on those evenings, it's like you reach into yourself and pull all you got out of there, and it's totally exhausting.--But an audience that jumps out of the woods and grabs you. **That** is a vital audience."

She further says that human beings have a language that goes beyond words, a language that enables us to read others. She feels that this happens in a performance between herself and an audience. "As that audience is vital, energetic, and giving, both sides, the audience and myself, walk out of that place different people," she concludes.

When asked about how she learned about herself through music, Odetta immediately responds "oh--that's fascinating. When I sing, there is another level. I don't think there are words to put into those things that I have learned and the way that I have grown, and the ways that it has brought confidence to me. I think of things, concepts and ideas, but I don,t know where they came from. I think that while I am performing, it's almost like I am a receiver. Stuff--good stuff, is coming. It's definitely through the music that I've grown up for sure," she adds.

She has also learned the history of the American people through folk music. She feels the need to focus on people, to find and see the positiveness that exists, and finally, to pass it on to others." When we see that this country and history is a shared one, maybe that will help encourage folks to get on with their lives rather than try to keep folks out," she says.

She also points out that once people are confident about themselves, then they don't have to knock others down and stand on top of them to "feel tall."

To Odetta, folk music provides a way to express more emotional areas than classical, jazz, or pop music. Folk music, be it one song, or a thousand songs, can show love, hate, fear, anger, frustation, and happiness,...all of the emotions.

To this end, Odetta says that she is "useful" through the music that she sings. "I am singing this 'good stuff,' and if it soothes or helps someone on to the next day, or if it acquaints them with something, I feel then that I have been of use. I have served.--It gives me a feeling of worth."

This is Odetta, "the most glorious voice in American Folk Music."--The New York Times.