

ARTS and FEATURES

21st birthday rite of passage celebrated with bar-hopping in town

By SCOTT MAXWELL
Staff Writer

A town with more bars per square mile than anywhere else in the state, Chapel Hill reigns as a hub for young adults celebrating their 21st birthdays. Renee Payne, a bartender at Spanky's Restaurant and Bar, said she'd seen many customers celebrating their new

rite of passage at Spanky's. "One of the big things to do is to come to Spanky's on the 21st birthday, but it's kind of a joke, since most of them have been drinking before," Payne said. Asking for free drinks is a common request for birthday patrons, Payne said. But Spanky's couldn't give away

birthday drinks even if the bartenders wanted to, because it's not legal to give alcohol away for free.

Spanky's does make an effort to keep the bar filled with only patrons that are of legal age, Payne said. Sometimes that means the doormen hold eager 20-year-old drinkers outside the Spanky's door until the stroke of midnight makes them officially 21, she said.

But Payne encouraged customers to come and celebrate their first "legal" birthday at Spanky's. "But make sure you are 21," she added.

Employees at the Franklin Street Bar & Grill said they got their share of 21-year-old birthday celebrations as well.

Douglass Brannon, a bartender at the establishment, said they usually didn't give away free drinks for birthdays, but "I'll buy people a beer every now or then."

Most of the time, birthday celebrations involve having a few too many beers with friends and waking up with a hangover, Brannon said. "Welcome to adult life."

That's how Chris, a senior political science major from Knightsdale, who preferred his real name not be used, started off his birthday evening. But it didn't end there.

Like most young adults, Chris was eager to start his birthday celebration early, so around noon on June 30 of this year, the new legal drinker and three of his friends headed for Franklin Street.

The celebrated occasion began with a friendly round of bar golf. From Spring Garden Bar & Grill, Chris' clan continued on to Ham's, Spanky's, Four Corners, The Sports Bar and then to The Cave, where they were the only patrons.

In order to pick up the pace of the celebration, the manager told them he would give them a birthday deal. The bartender's deal meant all the beer they



could drink for only 75 cents each.

Realizing this was obviously a deal too good to pass up, the four young men took full advantage of the offer, Chris recalled with a smile.

"By the time we left," Chris said, "I was thoroughly hammered."

The trek lasted a good four hours, but the group decided they needed a rest. "We went back to Granville for about an hour nap," he explained, "which

ended up being three hours."

10 p.m. arrived, and the die-hard four set off to Bub O'Malley's, and then to Eighth Street. The group was having a great time, as Chris last remembered. He also recalled getting free beer at most places.

"I haven't the foggiest idea how the evening ended," Chris said. "I was totally oblivious to what happened the rest of the evening."

This adventure is not atypical, said local bartenders.

In fact, those behind the bars at both Spanky's and the Franklin Street Bar & Grill said many newly turned 21-year-olds end their birthday evening inebriated to the extent of memory loss.

However, no matter how sick the birthday revelers end up, the Chapel Hill 21st-birthday bar tradition shows no signs of diminishing.

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Animals, agriculture in abundance at N.C. State Fair

From Associated Press reports

RALEIGH — Thousands of rabbits, goats, horses, sheep, cows and racing ducks will vie for space with ballooning youngsters Friday as the N.C. State Fair opens for a 10-day run.

And then there's Flip-A-Frog, a game in which wet, rubbery frogs are catapulted into revolving lily pads.

"Oh yes, Flip-a-Frog will be back. And the racing pigs will be back by popular demand — and racing ducks. That was hilarious," Sam Rand, the State Fair manager, said Monday. Rand's office directs everything from

a country store display to permits for French fry booths.

He's also keeping an eye on the forecast, praying for fair weather, you might say, to bring in a hoped-for 600,000-plus visitors.

James Strates Shows workers were unpacking and setting up the merry-go-round and erecting the skeletons of roller coasters and Ferris Wheels. The aroma of Italian sausage and fried onions was on the breeze, but the tiny sounds of rock-and-roll music were drowned out by the noises of construction.

A combined effort by handicapped advocates, the State Fair, the N.C. Department of Labor, the governor's office and Strates Shows has brought a plan to allow handicapped people to enjoy some of the rides, Rand said.

"It used to be that say, somebody on crutches, couldn't ride a ride because they got on at one place and were let out somewhere else and couldn't take their crutches on the rides," Rand said.

The new system will be in place for some of the rides to resolve those problems.

While the food and rides attract many to the fair, the focus remains on agriculture, Rand said.

This year, 31 agricultural commodity groups will promote their wares in a "Country Store" set up in the Kerr Scott Building.

A barber's chair, shoe shine stand and a "feed store" complete with bags of seed corn and beans are set up inside, along with cooler counters for dairy and meat products.

Dick Tippet was hanging wreaths from Rasland Farms in Godwin, but said his wares would be for display only. Catalogs will give shoppers addresses for ordering the North Carolina products.

The Carolinian train will be making two daily stops at the State Fairgrounds. A train from the N.C. Railroad Museum in Spencer will bring 800 fairgoers on Wednesday, Rand said. Tickets for that ride — at \$50 each including fair admission — sold out long ago.

The fair will feature a petting zoo this year. But the largest number of animals will be in livestock displays and the

buildings housing rabbits and poultry, not to mention horses.

Lillian Young, who keeps track of animal displays at the fair, couldn't tally all the critters. But she said nearly 600 rabbits and more than 3,000 turkeys, geese, hens, roosters, bantams and ducks were on display last year.

Rand said 2,475 horses would be brought in for shows and competition at the Hunt Horse Arena. Also, dairy cattle, beef steers, sheep and goats raised by 4-Hers will be judged in livestock shows.

"This year we've got sponsors so that every kid is gonna get something, even if he finishes in 15th place," Rand said. Corporate sponsors have put \$22,000 into a fund for the livestock competition.

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shouldn't have a significant impact," he said.

Federal cuts would affect student loans and medical research the most.

The cuts would not necessarily hurt the University's reputation because other public universities in the country would feel the same effects of the cuts, he said. "We'd be in the same position as other research institutions," Jones said.

On a national scale the field of medical research would suffer, Jones said. "It's something the nation cannot afford to let happen."

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