



THE GOSPEL SOUND of the Mt. Calvary No. 2 choir, a staple of the annual festival, draws a crowd by the general store.

Blue Crab Festival A Hit Once Again

BY SUSAN USHER

Handwoven sweetgrass baskets started at \$15. A plate of crawfish served with hot butter and cocktail sauce could be had for \$4, washed down with an iced lemonade or a Foster's.

That's Little River's annual Blue Crab Festival, home of good food, good bargains and good music, in an unbeatable setting.

Mt. Pleasant residents Marie, Margaret and Patricia Jefferson kept steadily at work fashioning their traditional baskets—the smallest requires a day's work—as visitors plundered contentedly through their spread of wares. Just around a corner, Furman Thornton was demonstrating his handmade dulcimers and Clete Waldmiller of Sunset Beach was spreading the word for the Bird Island Preservation Society. They were just a few of the 125 festival exhibitors who spread their wares and brochures among the gnarled live oaks and along the main drive of the waterfront business district.

Food vendors, 25 in all, plied an insatiable crowd (an estimated 45,000 guests came through the village over the two days) with their choice of crustaceans, from the festival's namesake cooked by various means to tiny boiled crawfish, steamed or curried shrimp, shrimp and grits, as well as clams, calamari, mussels marinara, conch chowder, grilled mullets, and the usual festival fare.

Mt. Calvary No. 2's Gospel Choir belted out standards to an enthusiastic following Saturday afternoon from the small stage at the general store. Across the way, listeners sought shade beneath a large carnival tent as Glenn Todd & Whitewater played a mix of country and crossover.

Those of tired of shopping or snacking followed Sally Nord's example. Nord was enjoying the sea breeze from the comfort of a waterfront dock. At this perch away from the crowds, but still in listening distance of the music, passing vessels and a bold boater or two provided bonus entertainment.

Nord is co-chairman of this year's N.C. Oyster Festival, and was looking over the festival with a keener eye than the casual stroller, on the alert for arts and crafts talent and fresh ideas.



BASKET BARGAINS! Marie, Margaret and Patricia Jefferson (background) of Mt. Pleasant, S.C., continue weaving as festival regulars Liz Hanke and Mark Rinda of Little River inspect their array of handmade sweetgrass baskets.



DEBBIE AND JOE CUSEO of Myrtle Beach take time out on a waterfront dock.

Free Jazz Concert To Kick Off Drive

An evening of jazz, with music by Faction with BCC Visiting Artist Jon Thornton, will kick off the Brunswick Arts Council's 1993-94 membership drive.

The free concert, with refreshments provided, will be held Saturday, May 22, at 7:30 p.m. at the Moose Lodge on Long Beach Road, Southport. The council will be accepting memberships that night.

Now in its 11th year, the council serves as a funding source for arts programs in the county and works to promote support for, and participation in, community arts events. Its work is coordinated by a volunteer board of directors led by President Steve Skillman, and arts events are promoted through a periodic member newsletter. Along with funds it raises through various means, the council also serves as the distributing point for state Grassroots Art Program funds.

This year grants ranging from \$500 to \$1,500, distributed by the Brunswick Arts Council, supported a pops concert by the Brunswick Concert Band; "Sounds Local," a WHQR Public Radio program featuring regional culture and the arts; the Associated Artists of Southport children's art classes; Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department's Very Special Arts Festival and the Brunswick County Schools' cultural arts program.

That grant helped provide a North Brunswick High School Band

spring concert, the West Brunswick High School Chorus Christmas and spring concerts; an honorarium for Bert Owen, guest conductor for the first All-County High School Band concert held May 15; a student production of "Steel Magnolias" at West Brunswick High School; two school performances and an after-school workshop by "Poetry Alive," a troupe from Asheville; and "Cultural Arts Day," an annual event that integrates traditional social studies with cultural customs and performances.

Memberships are available in several categories: individual, \$10; sponsor, \$25; patron, \$50; friend, \$100; benefactor, \$250; and grand benefactor, \$500 or more.

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