

Bob Johnson

What's Happening!

Wednesday night, July 16, through Wednesday night, July 23, was a time that will long be remembered in the hearts and minds of many people. For some it was that long-awaited vacation, lazily spent on the banks of the Caribbean. For others it was an exciting honeymoon trip to the romantic South Sea Islands. For this reporter it was seven glorious days spent with the Squaws and Braves celebrating the Squaws' seventh national biennial conclave. The conclave was hosted by the Charlotte Chapter of the Squaws, Inc. and headquartered at the Radisson Plaza Hotel.

The actual dates for the conclave were July 17-20. However, things began Wednesday night July 16 at the Radisson. Betty McLaurin, the very personable national president of this outstanding women's group was roasted by a select cross section of the many people whose lives she's



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touched. A roast in its social connotation is a humorous way of ridiculing or bantering a person in jest. The roasters who are not in the business of being funny, did quite well at evoking laughter from a packed room of members and guests. This 7 p.m. affair was the springboard for the amusing times to follow.

Thursday, July 17, the conclave really began. Some of the Braves, who by the way, are the husbands of the Squaws, traveled to Pawtucket Golf Course to sharpen their game for the first annual Ernest Cherry Memorial Golf Tournament, which was held Friday and Saturday. Others toured the city or just lounged around. The Papooses, who are the children, spent their time at the movies and getting to know one another. For the Squaws it was a day of business.

Thursday night the Squaws were able to get loose. Celebration on the Reservation was the theme for a very impressive event. All 16 chapters participated in this lavish production, that featured a costume and talent contest. The Civic Center sparkled with the brilliant colors of the original costumes, and pulsed with the strain of amateur talent. The members representing the Houston, Texas chapter won the costume contest, while the Detroit members captured the talent segment. A disco dance and a delicious breakfast topped a splendid evening.

Friday, July 18, the golfers spent their time dodging the sun and chopping the grounds of Pawtucket's tough 18-hole track. After such a grueling day, they met at the Omega Fraternity house for a right on time smoker cookout. Aaaaah, what a refreshing relief was the attitude. The children spent the day at Eastland Mall. For the ladies, it was business as usual.

Friday night the restraints were lifted again. This time the Squaws and Braves gathered for a Hee Haw Country Breakfast and Dance. For this affair, the dress was western style, but the merriment was packed with plenty of down-home soul. Once again, the evening was topped with a scrumptious breakfast, country style no less.

Jimmy Westley of Savannah, Ga. won the golf tournament very handily. After Saturday's final round, the Braves congregated at Brave Sam Davis' spacious home in Hyde Park for a feast. The Papooses spent the day at Carowinds. The Squaws convened at a luncheon where they chose Virginia Shadd of Charlotte, Squaw of the Year.

The Blue and White Starlite Ball was the gala occurrence for Saturday night. This invitational allowed the Squaws to mingle with friends other than the ones in the fold. Everyone looked very chic in their formal attire, dancing to the music of the Johnny White Band and engaging in titillating conversation with their guests.

Sunday, July 20, after the installation and awards brunch, it was off to Hilton Head Island to rest and relax. A well deserved retreat for a group of men and women who spent a lot of time, energy and other resources to put together what had to be one of the best of the seven national conclaves.

While at Hilton Head, Christine Bowser won a trophy in the Bridge Tournament. Norma Westmoreland, also a Charlotte Squaw won a nice trophy compliments of the Whist Tournament. William Gill, John Shadd and Stanley Stewart won trophies in the Arnold-Cherry Memorial Golf Tournament.

The perfect cap for a marvelous experience was a day, July 23, spent with Booker and Gloria Mears at their Sea Cabin Villa. Their hospitality and warmth was matched only by the beautiful weather.



Students learning floral design at Petal Pusher. Donna Koptr, Donna Robinson, Whitley, Kathy Sloan and Penny Christenbury. (Photo by Eileen Hanson) Jacquelyn Morrow (instructor), Arneise

Petal Pusher Trains Young People In Floral Design

By Eileen Hanson
Special To The Post

Next time you want to send a special message to someone, why not say it with flowers from the Petal Pusher?

Located at 328-A N. Brevard, Petal Pusher is no ordinary flower shop. It is part of the employment program of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Youth Council, training young people in floral design and sales. The florist is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday. Delivery service is available.

At present 7 students are enrolled in the program. Eight others have already completed training since the project began last November.

"When the students finish the program, they should be able to get a job in a florist, or open their own shop," said Jacquelyn Morrow, who came to the Youth Council a year ago to be the instructor and manager of Petal Pusher. Ms. Morrow formerly operated her own floral shop, Flowers by Jacquelyn.

Petal Pusher provides all the services of a regular florist: corsages, center pieces, wedding, funeral, and holiday arrangements. Live, silk or dried flowers are available, many on display in the attractive new shop on North Brevard.

Prices are competitive with other commercial shops: corsages start at \$2.50, and vase with carnation is \$2., arrangements start at \$7. Healthy green plants range from \$1. to \$25. All the flowers are fresh and colorful.

When The Charlotte Post dropped in for a visit last Monday, 5 students were gathered around the table in the back room making carnation arrangements. Two of the young women, Penny Christenbury and Kathy Sloan, are full-time students in the program, working 40 hours per week. They both want to own their own florist shop some day.

Three others - Donna Koptr, Diane Robinson and Arneise Whitley - are high school students, working 24 hours a week as part of the summer job program. They are exploring floral design as a possible career.

Two other students are Jackie Howard, also a part-time student at Hamilton College, and Kay Henderson, a summer employee.

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All students in the program receive minimum wage (\$3.10 an hour) from the Mini-cities program which sponsors the training project, or from the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA).

However, by September 30, 1980 all federal funding will end. According to Greg Reid, job developer for the youth Council's 5 training programs, the goal is to make them self-sufficient by that date.

"We think we can make it, with more publicity and community support," said Reid.

Other parts of the program include Chef's Choice Restaurant, 3 day care centers, Mini-city Auto Service, and Rehabco Construction Co. A TV and a radio repair business will begin next week as the sixth training program. It will be located in the same building as Petal Pusher.

The program was designed by Youth Council director Phyllis Lynch, who saw the need to train disadvantaged youth for profitable careers. Many of the students have had difficulty finding jobs because they lacked proper training or on-the-job experience.

"If the community was more aware of what we're doing, businesses would come to us for trained people," said Reid, who helps the participants find permanent jobs when they've completed the program. "We can benefit businesses by providing young people who are already trained and eager to work."

Two weeks ago The Charlotte Post ran an article about the Chef's Choice Restaurant, located in the Trade Street YWCA. The day it appeared Reid received a call from the Radisson Hotel inquiring about students to interview for full-time positions.

Ms. Morrow says the floral business is growing, though Petal Pusher's recent move from the Charlotte Mall to the N. Brevard location hurt business.

"We suffer from lack of publicity. Our main promotion is by word of mouth," said Ms. Morrow.

But the flowers themselves are the real promoters for Petal Pusher's business. So the next time you have something special to tell someone special in your life, say it with flowers.

To Protect Elderly Insurance Commission Urged To Adopt New Rule

RALEIGH - In hearings before the state Insurance Commission last November, elderly Legal Services clients from across North Carolina told of high pressure and intimidating practices by the insurance salespeople selling worthless and overpriced health insurance policies.

They testified that one of the most frequent areas of the abuse is supplemental health insurance which is supposedly designed to fill in the coverage gaps which exist in Medicare, the federal program established in 1966 to protect people 65 and older from the ravages of high medical costs and the inadequate protection afforded by private health insurance.

Today, two of those same witnesses, plus several experts in the areas of financial planning and publications design, told the Insurance Commission that it should adopt a proposed rule which would require agents selling health insurance to provide prospective buyers with a brochure, the "N.C. Buyer's Guide to Health Insurance and Medicare," prepared by the Insurance Department, and to certify in writing that the pamphlet was given to the buyer.

The proposed rule would also require that at the beginning of sales presentations, agents will present consumers with a copy of a current edition of the federally-prepared "Guide to Health Insurance for People with Medicare." That guide also contains a checklist to assist buyers in determining their insurance needs.

"The adoption of this rule would go a long way toward helping the more than 500,000 elderly residents of our state to intelligently decide whether or not they need additional health insurance coverage," said Merrille

Whitten, Counseling Coordinator for the Accounting Aid Society of Charlotte.

Another Charlotte resident, Ann Sheffield, Community Development Specialist for Senior Citizens, stated that in her experience with the elderly she is continually amazed at how many old folks at home, mostly widows, fall victim to the dazzling array of schemes which insurance agents use on the phone, at the door and through television advertising to promote the sale of worthless or overpriced health insurance policies.

"This is a record of shame which cries out for corrective action not only in North Carolina but across the country," said Ms. Sheffield.

If adopted, the proposed rule would require insurance agents to provide buyers with copies of the two buyer's guides. Copies of the N.C. Guide would be printed by the insurance companies themselves.

The N.C. Guide, cautions consumers to shop for the best insurance buys, not to over-buy, and to be wary of policies covering certain

single diseases like cancer or heart disease. It also warns against paying for prospective premiums in cash, and it states that each company must give prospective buyers 10 days to examine a policy before they purchase it.

Trina Gentry, Community Education Director of Legal Services of North Carolina, told the Commission that the proposed N.C. pamphlet will be helpful to prospective buyers but that to be truly effective the Commission has an obligation to ensure that the pamphlet is legible for persons 65 and older.

After explaining various vision problems which often affect the elderly, Ms. Gentry said that the pamphlet can be made more readable by increasing the contrast between the printed matter and the paper, by reducing the glare, and by using ink and paper color combinations that have been tested for their legibility.

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