

Valence Brings New Charlotte Sound

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The contemporary music group, Sparkle, proved to be real crowd-pleasers drawing a large number of WestFest revelers to the sound stage to hear saucy renditions of popular tunes. For more scenes of the westside street festival see page 8A. Photo By Calvin Ferguson

WestFest '87

Bringing People Together

By Jalyne Strong
Post Managing Editor

"It's like a huge reunion. I've seen old friends, acquaintances, and teachers I've had. Plus I was able to work as well as participate in the fun. It's been the greatest thing that could happen for my business. The exposure I received is worth a lot."

Barbara Garnette, owner and operator of Bedspreads Etc., couldn't say enough to describe how much she was enjoying WestFest '87, the northwest street festival that took place at the intersection of Beatties Ford Rd. and LaSalle St. last Saturday.

Garnette's company was one of the several, mostly black-owned businesses which participated as vendors at WestFest this year. Garnette, herself, enjoyed the sun, camaraderie and promotional aspects of the festival. But most of all, Garnette explained, "I'm proud (WestFest) is on the west side, where I grew up."

On Saturday, from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m., 25,000 people came to enjoy the festivities of the second annual WestFest. The tempera-

ture had reached the 90's by midday, but the crowd of revelers either decided to enjoy the heat or just not complain about it.

There were plenty of other things to do.

People came to see gospel performing groups (seven), and/or the contemporary music performers (seven); the various and varied wares sold by the vendors; to meet and greet representatives from the 35 community organizations which displayed information booths; and to enjoy the rides of the mini-amusement park.

They also came to witness the barbecue contest; perhaps to enter, and maybe win. Plus they could savor a wide choice of edibles (one of which was a delicious, spicy dish called Caribbean Chicken). They also rushed to enter a raffle for a trip to Jamaica. And they were compelled by the African beat to the area where the congo drums played.

As all these activities were going on simultaneously, there was never a lull at WestFest.

"I'll be back next year," assured Robert Robinson, owner of

General Merchandise and a participating WestFest vendor.

Henry and Cheryl Martin brought their four-month-old son, Jared, to experience his first WestFest.

"It's very nice," Cheryl pointed out about the festival. "It's a great turnout and it shows good community support."

Henry agreed and added, "It's a good event. I think WestFest is an excellent opportunity to see people you haven't seen in awhile. And, it provides a nice cultural entertainment mix."

Sam Young, chairman of WestFest, Inc., assessed this year's event saying, "WestFest '87 afforded the community an opportunity to come out and blend. Blacks came together for fun and the betterment of our community."

Captain Bill Ensley of the Charlotte Police Department who was one of several police officers monitoring the crowd called WestFest a "very peaceful and calm, large crowd."

"There were no fights or arrests, which is very unusual for a crowd this size," described the officer. "The police had nothing more to do than be there and handle the traffic. It was a very good group."

State Alexander, a member of WestFest, Inc., comments, "We're happy with the outstanding turnout."

"WestFest can't do anything but get better," Alexander continues. "The best thing is how the community worked along with us. I can't thank enough the volunteers who pitched in."

By 8 p.m. last Saturday night, the sun was almost down and the large, happy and peaceful crowd began leaving the intersection of LaSalle and Beatties Ford Rd. They had enjoyed the food, festivities and fun of the largest party on the west side. They had plenty to go and tell their friends about. Maybe they already saw many of their friends at the celebration.

As Alexander says, "WestFest brings a lot of people together."

Black Legislators Host Town Meeting

The North Carolina Legislative Black Caucus, in cooperation with the North Carolina Association of Minority Business, the North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development and the North Carolina Minority Business Development Agency, will sponsor a Town Hall meeting as a feature of the Third Annual Legislative Weekend, Friday June 19 from 2 to 5 p.m.

The meeting will provide an opportunity for minority firms to express concerns about problems unique to their businesses. In an effort to insure that the problems are addressed appropriately, representatives from minority business assistance agencies will be present.

The meeting will also help the N.C. Legislative Black Caucus develop an agenda of priority items related to minority business development.

A highlight of the Town Hall meeting will be a special segment devoted to the five percent goal in minority business and historically black college participation in defense projects. This is intended to provide an unique opportunity for minority businesses and historically black col-

leges to increase their participation in defense projects.

The Town Hall meeting will be followed by a reception which will allow interaction in a relaxed environment that may lead to the creation of productive business relationships. It will also allow for caucus members to meet and further interact with minority business owners.

The North Carolina Legislative Caucus consists of the 16 black legislators in the North Carolina General Assembly. Rep. Daniel T. Blue (Wake) is chairman; Sen. William Martin (Guilford) is vice chairman; Rep. Thomas C. Hardaway (Halifax) is secretary; and Rep. Herman C. Gist (Guilford) is treasurer of the caucus.

Other members include: Rep. Howard C. Barnhill (Mecklenburg); Rep. Logan Burke (Forsyth); Rep. William "Pete" Cunningham (Mecklenburg); Rep. Chancy R. Edwards (Cumberland); Rep. Milton F. Fitch (Wilson); Rep. William Freeman (Wake); Sen. Ralph A. Hunt (Durham); Rep. Luther R. Jeralds (Cumberland); Rep. Annie Brown Kennedy (Forsyth); Rep. Sidney A. Locks (Robeson); Rep. H. M. Michaux (Durham) and Sen. James F. Richardson (Mecklenburg).

For more information on the Town Meeting, please contact Gwen Reynolds at (919) 733-5959.



Cunningham

Rise In State Enterprise

RALEIGH -- North Carolina has averaged better than two new plant announcements a week for the first five and a half months of 1987, Governor Jim Martin told the state Board of Economic Development today. Speaking to the board's quarterly meeting in Raleigh, Martin said, "North Carolina continues to perform well in business development even though competition for new investments has increased dramatically."

The Governor said preliminary Commerce Department figures report a total of 40 new investment announcements of more than \$1 million in the first five and a half months of 1987. Nineteen of the announcements exceed \$5 million. In all, Martin said, the Department has identified \$351 million in investment in new facilities since the beginning of the year. Expansion announcements are not included in the preliminary statistics.

The Governor said job announcements associated with the new investments totaled 5,669.

The roll call of these firms includes Rocco Turkeys, Golden Poultry, Takeda Chemical, Eastman Kodak, Praxis Biologics, Carver Boat Company, White Consolidated Industries, Ace Hardware, Okuma Machinery Works, CPC International, Dart Container, Sheller-Globe, and still more," said Martin.

Martin also cited other recent reports which reflect the overall strength of the state's economic efforts.

"Just last week," noted Governor Martin, "the Southern Industrial Development Council reported that North Carolina led the Southeast in 1986 in the creation of new manufacturing jobs and placed second in the amount of new manufacturing investment."

"Based on preliminary figures from the Commerce Department, Martin said, "those rankings counted 24,682 job announce-

ments in North Carolina and \$2.5 billion in investment last year.

"North Carolina also continues to show well in opinion polls of American corporate executives," the Governor said.

"A national survey of corporate real estate directors released by Manufacturing Week magazine in March of this year, shows that North Carolina continues to rank number one as manufacturing executive's first choice for a new location.

"Nearly one-quarter of the executives questioned said that within the entire continental United States, North Carolina would be their most likely choice for a new plant site," said the Governor. "Texas and California ranked second with 21% each.

The Governor said North Carolina's economy is also continuing to show the benefits of strong economic growth.

Unemployment Drop

"Unemployment fell to 5.3% in 1986," said Martin. "That's nearly two points below the national average, and the lowest rate for North Carolina since 1979.

"And while unemployment has gone down - total employment has gone up," Martin said. "More North Carolinians were working in 1986 than ever before in our history. Average total employment in North Carolina climbed above 3,000,000 for the first time; and manufacturing employment reached its second highest level ever.

"Even in the textile industry, where we've lost jobs in recent years, there were job gains.

"Finally, 1986 was also a year for strong gains for our travel and film development initiatives.

"Travel revenues in 1986 reached \$5.1 billion -- a gain of over 10% above 1985, and the first time the industry has crossed the \$5 billion mark," the Governor continued.

"In the exciting new area of film development, we saw 22 major motion pictures produced in North Carolina in 1986 with a total economic impact of \$266 million."

"North Carolina's economic development has never been healthier and its future never brighter," Martin concluded.

Planned Parenthood Challenges State Abortion Rule

Planned Parenthood of Greater Charlotte, the directors of the Durham and Anson counties Departments of Social Services and two physicians filed suit to challenge the North Carolina Social Services Commission's new rules on the State Abortion Fund, scheduled to take effect June 1, 1987. The complaint will be filed in Wake County

Superior Court.

The Social Service Commission's new rules require county social service workers to ask all poor women seeking assistance from the State Abortion Fund if they would like to see models of fetal development and require social services department directors to report to a district attorney any

State Abortion Fund applicant who claims to have been a victim of rape.

The complaint seeks both injunctive relief and a declaratory judgment against the rules because:

the rules exceed the administrative authority of the Social Services Commission;

the rules violate the constitutional right to privacy of applicants for the State Abortion Fund;

the rules violate the equal protection clause of the North Carolina Constitution and the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution;

the rape and incest reporting re-

See Abortion Rule on Page 5A

Plans For Black Political Convention

In Preparation For '88 Elections

Washington, DC - The heads of the nation's major black political organizations announced recently that they will convene a national conference of black elected and appointed officials at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, DC, January 20-23, 1988.

The conference, officially called The Fifth National Policy Institute, will involve more than 1,000 elected and appointed officials from across the country. These officials will develop political strategies,

discuss public policy issues, and explore the problems of government as they relate to the black community.

The conference will be coordinated by the National Policy Institute of the Joint Center for Political Studies. The Center's Institute program grew out of the Fourth National Policy Institute of public officials which was held in 1984.

Speaking on behalf of the sponsors of the Fifth National Policy

Institute, Eddie N. Williams, president of the Joint Center for Political Studies, said, "The deliberations of the nation's black elected and appointed officials will make a valuable contribution to the presidential selection process."

Black public officials have met nationally four times before, in 1967, 1969, 1975, and 1984. Beginning in 1988, the national meetings will be held every four years, coinciding with presidential election years.



Martin

White Consolidated Industries, Ace Hardware, Okuma Machinery Works, CPC International, Dart Container, Sheller-Globe, and still more," said Martin.

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