

Local venues host weddings

STAFF REPORT

While most people look back fondly on their time in college as a blur of classes and parties, some happy couples remember it as the time when they met The One.

Many choose to marry in their hometowns or exotic destinations, but some UNC alumni might choose to hold their special day where they spent their college years.

Each year, many graduates make plans to walk down the aisle in Chapel Hill, and local organizations to their part to help in the wedding-planning process.

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau recently published its 2005 Wedding Guide.

The 24-page booklet — which includes information on wedding venues, accommodations, bed-and-breakfast inns and historic sites — can be used for planning a wedding in anywhere Orange County.

Guides are available at the Visitors Center, located at 501 W. Franklin St., or can be requested online at Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Web site at <http://www.chocvb.org>.

The center is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays.

One popular campus location is the Carolina Inn, located at 211 Pittsboro St., which has played host to weddings for Chapel Hill locals and UNC lovers for generations.

With two full-time wedding specialists on hand, the Inn's staff will help couples customize a reception



DTH FILE PHOTO

Employees of Traditions of Chapel Hill model bridal gowns last year at the Carolina Inn's Bridal Fair 2004. The annual event attracts hundreds of people looking for local services and samples of champagne and food.

to fit any needs.

Wedding package prices range from \$57 to \$129 per person, including all service charges and taxes.

Reception costs vary depending on the season, ballroom and time of day, but all packages include perks and services such as a champagne toast, white-gloved servers to pass hors d'oeuvres and beverages, bartending service and complimentary linens and votive candles.

Recently, the Inn also played host to Bridal Fair 2005 on Jan. 30.

Sponsored by the Inn, The Chapel Hill Herald and Traditions of Chapel Hill, the annual event presents a wide array of vendors for hundreds of families and husbands- and wives-to-be to peruse as they sampled hors d'oeuvres and wedding cake, washed down with champagne served by the wandering Inn staff.

Each of the rooms features

various vendors from Chapel Hill and surrounding areas, including Hillsborough.

To receive an information packet about holding a wedding at the Inn, send your name, address and phone number in an e-mail to weddings@carolinainn.com.

To arrange a personal consultation, call 918-2749.

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.

Options vary for same-sex couples

BY ADAM RODMAN
STAFF WRITER

Ridiculously expensive roses. Cheesy cards. Romantic dinners. Valentine's Day means different things to many couples, heterosexual and same-sex alike.

"It's really no different from any other couple," said Stephanie Chang, coordinator of UNC's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Office.

But when a same-sex couple goes out, there is sometimes subtle discrimination. It is something that cannot be avoided by many in the GLBTQ community, Chang said.

"The fear of harassment and discrimination is always present, always in the forefront," Chang said.

Some restaurants are friendlier than others for same-sex couples looking to go out.

"I think this is a comfortable space like anywhere on 9th (Street)," said Karin Mills, co-owner of Francesca's Dessert Caffe in Durham. "We get all kinds of couples. ... We have a common space with no funny looks."

Brigner Milne, the manager of Legends, a private bar and club in Raleigh that caters to the GLBTQ community, said he thinks a gay bar is the best place for a same-sex couple on Valentine's Day.

"You can't go and have dinner with someone," he said. "You can't have a date or hold someone's hand in public."

Milne estimated that about 20 percent of his club's clientele are college students from around the Triangle.

But Milne said he thinks there is a need for safe outlets, especially on Valentine's Day. "We need restaurants, gay bed and breakfasts, and other outlets besides the bar."

But Zach Howell, treasurer of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender-Straight Alliance, is more optimistic.

"Valentine's Day is a time for romance," he said. "If anything, I'd imagine it'd be the other way."

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.

Concert spots offer weekend entertainment

STAFF REPORT

As couples finalize plans for the perfect Valentine's Day celebration on Monday, take some time this weekend to relax with shows on the local entertainment scene.

On Saturday, Cat's Cradle, located at 300 E. Main St. in Carrboro, will host Thad Cockrell at 9 p.m.

Cockrell, a North Carolina singer-songwriter whose motto is "puttin' the hurt back in country," aims to keep his music firmly rooted in tradition and often collaborates with other artists from across the state.

The opening band, The Old Ceremony, is a pop-noir musical association hailing from Chapel

Hill.

With an ensemble of bass, drums, piano and organ and a rotating cast of musicians on violin, cello, sax, trumpet, accordion and saw, the group creates a sound that is "distinctly American and faintly exotic," according to the band's Web site.

Tickets to the show are \$8 in advance and \$10 on the day of the show.

Also on Saturday, The ArtsCenter — located in the same shopping center as Cat's Cradle at 300-G E. Main St. in Carrboro — will offer mellow tunes at the Carrboro Wind and Brass Festival at 11:30 a.m.

Wind and brass ensembles from across the Triangle will perform

concert marches, show tunes, classical transcriptions, traditional band music and contemporary compositions.

One performer — The Village Band — features amateur musicians from Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Durham, Hillsborough, Raleigh and Cary whose backgrounds vary from doctor to pilot to software engineer to retiree.

Ages of individual performers range from the 20s to the 80s, and their skill levels run from near-professional to those who haven't played since high school or college.

Tickets to the festival are \$6 or \$5 ArtsCenter Friends.

The ArtsCenter will offer a different flavor at 7 p.m. Sunday

with a taste of the theater in "The February 48."

The show will be presented by One Song Productions, a local youth-run theater company funded in part by the Orange County Arts Commission.

Local teens will join together to create new theater works, with four teams that will have 48 hours to write, rehearse and perform original one-act plays.

The culmination of the groups' work will be the Sunday evening performance. Tickets for the students' show are \$8 or \$5 ArtsCenter Friends and students.

Contact the A&E Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.