

Carrboro shows musical side

BY MEGHAN DAVIS
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

For one Sunday afternoon a year, the atmosphere that characterizes Weaver Street Market in Carrboro expands throughout downtown for the Carrboro Music Festival.

The backyard revelry typical of the store's shady front lawn — people of all ages, dogs of all sizes and musical instruments of all varieties — stretches from the market to Town Hall.

Banjos plunk away on one stage while drum kits echo from across the street and voices resonate from around the corner.

Children climb the stone fountain with ice cream dripping down their faces while adults take in the music and chat with their neighbors.

Dogs have a respite from the heat from a bowl of water sitting on the sidewalk in front of Weaver Street Realty, while their owners sip drinks inside Nested, a new venue this year.

The festival's eighth year featured twenty-one stages, including four other new ones — Archer Graphics, Orchid Island Trading

Company, Padgett Station and WCOM Radio.

The Carrboro Music Festival Committee runs the annual event along with the town's recreation and parks department and local sponsors.

Volunteer coordinator Meg McGurk said that there were about 65 volunteers running the festival and that each venue was manned by its own volunteers.

The committee sold raffle tickets to offset the costs of running the festival, along with purple T-shirts commemorating this year's event.

Carrboro bluegrass band The Brown Mountain Lights, one of about 150 musical acts performing Sunday, played a set from the market lawn.

As they introduced a song that recently was featured on the show "Veronica Mars," singer Janet Place, who also sits on the festival committee, joked that no one in the audience seemed likely to watch much television.

In the street nearby, the young and not-so-young kept time to the music as they spun adult-sized hula hoops

that are used in a hooping class at Balanced Movement Studio.

A few steps up Weaver Street, the Little Blue Choo — a trackless, 27-passenger tram — carried families from the market lawn down the street to the kid-oriented crafts and inflatable slides in Town Commons.

Along the way, the street was dotted with campaign booths, where local politicians rubbed T-shirted elbows with their constituents.

Even national politicians went casual — former Sen. John Edwards, also in a T-shirt and sandals, stopped by the Orange County Democratic Party's booth with his wife Elizabeth to greet supporters and soon-to-be neighbors.

Edwards said that once he and his family move into their newly built house in October, he will be more visible around town.

But for a moment Sunday, he was able to pull his sunglasses back down and enjoy the music with the rest of the crowd.

Contact the City Editor
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Democrats focus on elections, collaboration

BY ERIC JOHNSON
ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

RALEIGH — With no national or statewide races up for grabs this year, the UNC-Chapel Hill Young Democrats are focusing on a handful of local elections that could have a significant impact on Chapel Hill.

And that has meant spending a lot of time in Raleigh.

"Raleigh is the only city in the Triangle that really has municipal elections that are straight-up partisan," said Tom Jensen, a UNC-CH senior and president of the N.C. Federation of College Democrats. "We need people in Raleigh who are really committed to working cooperatively with our leaders in Chapel Hill and Durham."

In Orange County, Democratic candidates largely dominate local elections, with political battles fought mostly in single-party primary races. Durham municipal elections are mostly a Democratic battleground as well, Jensen said.

"So you can't, as a party organization, work for Democrats running against other Democrats," he said. "That's why the focus is on Raleigh."

In the capital city, Mayor Charles Meeker, a Democrat first elected in 2001, is facing challenges from Republican J.H. Ross and Libertarian Steven Hilton. After winning by a margin of 55 percent to 29 percent in a contentious 2003 race against Republican city coun-

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TOM JENSEN, PRESIDENT OF N.C. FEDERATION OF COLLEGE DEMOCRATS

cilman John Odom, the mayor is expected to have little trouble winning reelection this year.

"We're taking it seriously, but the competition is not as difficult as it has been in the past," said Justin Guillory, Meeker's campaign manager and former president of the UNC Young Democrats. "But for some of these city council races, they're very competitive."

It is those Raleigh city council races that have become a priority for the group and the catalyst for a new partnership between the Chapel Hill YDs and their Wolfpack counterparts, the N.C. State University College Democrats.

A group of six N.C. State students and four UNC students met Friday afternoon to conduct door-to-door canvassing in North Raleigh — and trade a few insults about Saturday's football game.

"We just thought it would be cool to come together the day before the big game and show some solidarity," Jensen said.

Walking through an older neighborhood just outside the Raleigh beltline, Jensen worked in tandem with Jessie Mendez, president of

the N.C. State College Democrats.

Marking off a list of registered Democrats and unaffiliated voters, the two knocked on doors and reminded supporters to turn out for the Oct. 11 elections. They dropped off brochures for Meeker and Democratic council candidates Paul Anderson and Russ Stephenson.

Mendez, who became president of the College Democrats in August, said the partnership with UNC-CH resulted from a series of e-mails between herself and Jensen, and from the support of Meeker's campaign office.

"One of the goals I really wanted was for all of the college groups — not just UNC, but for Duke (University) and Wake Forest (University) — to work more closely together," Mendez said.

That's a vision Jensen pledged to make a priority.

"In the past it's been really kind of a diffused group where people haven't gotten together enough," he said. "We're trying to do things like this all over the state."

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