

Fair has little effect on area business

by Bill Stadenc

It's business as usual this summer in Black Mountain and Swannanoa, despite predictions early this spring that the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville would bring record numbers of tourists to Western North Carolina.

An informal survey of several area businesses revealed that World's Fair tourists are not visiting the Swannanoa Valley in the large numbers previously projected.

Despite the absence of World's Fair tourists, area stores and shops appear to be doing the brisk business they do every summer.

"The Fair has not caused any noticeable increase in our business this summer," said Jerry Matthews, owner of Reed's Acorn Motel. "This time of year we are full anyway, so the Fair has not influenced us very much at all."

"Maybe we would have had a room or two open one or two nights a week and maybe the Fair may have been responsible for filling these rooms," Matthews said. "But as far as all the predictions, they just have not materialized. Tourists are not beating down the doors like everybody thought they would."

Bob Danuser, manager of the Travel-Eze Motel, agreed that the World's Fair has had little influence on his business this summer.

"It is Blue Ridge, Montreat and Ridgecrest. These are the people who fill our motel," said Danuser. "Very few of our guests have been to the Fair."

Danuser added that the Travel-Eze business was running slightly above average, but attributed that to the fact that he has not increased his rates as much as some other motel managers, especially in Asheville.

"It is mostly repeat tourists who



THE 1982
WORLD'S FAIR

come back every year and people in the immediate area who frequent our store," said Mildred Vaillancourt, manager of Gift Crafts. "Very few of our customers were commuting, one way or the other, to the World's Fair."

Vaillancourt, like many of the area merchants surveyed, said she had never really expected the pre-summer predictions to hold true.

"We did not anticipate thousands of tourists, because if you don't anticipate you are not disappointed," she said. "We did not buy more than we usually do and we did not increase our stock. I simply did not see how we could gain that much from the Fair."

Arleina Jordan, manager of Tanglewood KOA Campground in Swannanoa, agreed that this was a good business summer, but added that the World's Fair has had little to do with it.

"We have not had any more people than last year," Jordan said. "We have been very busy, but that is not because of the Fair. We are always busy in the summer."

"We simply are not being swamped under with campers," she added. "We were packed over the Fourth of July, but we always are. It is business as usual this summer."

Jean Williams, a cashier at Sourwood Exxon, said there has been a very slight increase in business, but added that the projections have been way off.

"We are right here on the Interstate, so business is always pretty good," Williams said. "There has been no big difference because of the Fair. Sure, there has been some difference, but it's not been humongous."

Williams said she thought tourists were driving straight through to the Fair without stopping along the way. "Some are stopping, but most are not. Also, I think a lot of people got scared off by all the pre-season publicity, like in Asheville, that rates are going to double and there will be few vacancies."

Sam Woolwine, of Roses, also reported business-as-usual this summer.

"There has been a slight increase in sales from last summer, but I don't believe you can attribute it to the Fair," Woolwine said. "I attribute it to the inflation rate. If prices go up and you are still selling the same number of goods, your sales will increase."

Bill Davis, manager of the Apple Blossom Motel, also reported a slight increase in business this summer, but he, too, did not attribute it to World's Fair traffic.

"In May of this year we were up in occupancy by 20 percent," Davis said. "And in June we went up eight percent. But we also had increases in the winter months before the Fair--20 percent in February, 10 percent in March and 8 percent in April. But this is not because of the Fair. I attribute this to our listing in Triple A."

Davis said that out of the 1,350 rooms that he has rented since the Fair began, less than 30 of those tenants were going to or coming from Knoxville.

Tourists from the local conference centers and assemblies have made up most of the business at the Old Depot this summer, said manager Lillian Reynolds.

"Most of those people who come in here from the Fair, and there have been

very few, have spent most of their money at the Fair and are just looking when they get here," Reynolds said. "Most said they would not go back because of long lines and the heat."

"We thought we would have a tremendous summer," she added. "We have had a good summer, but not in the numbers predicted. People just are not stopping here. Once they get started home, they just keep going."

The Monte Vista appeared to be one of the few area businesses that did notice an appreciable increase in business which could be attributed to the 1982 World's Fair.

"We had a large increase during May and June because of people here for the World's Fair," said Marilyn Phillips, owner of the hotel. "We had nearly twice as many people as usual in those two months."

"I think people are a little bit disappointed with the Fair," she said. "The theme of the Fair is not a popular one. People are now in a nostalgic age and people seem to fear energy. Besides, energy in West Germany looks like energy in France to most people."

McDonald's also reported a brisk business this summer. Eddie Oakes, an assistant manager, attributed this to the fact that many tour busses stop at McDonald's.

Chamber of Commerce secretary Ed Weber described the World's Fair-related tourist traffic as "spotty."

"This is partially because of bus tours which stop at places like McDonald's, but other types of businesses do not benefit as much," Weber said. "But there is always some spin-off. The better a McDonald's or a Hardee's does, the more shopping that is done locally at stores to stock up on supplies, film and the like. It is a residual effect."

"We are up and we are healthy this summer," said Weber. "The Fair may have encouraged people who were considering a trip here to go ahead and make that trip. And we do have until October when the Fair ends."

Accident traps youth in car

Black Mountain firemen worked for 35 minutes to free a youth trapped in a wrecked car on Cragmont and Byrd Road July 27. They received the call for assistance at 2:52 a.m.

Five juveniles were in the car at the time of the one-car accident.

There were no injuries, Chief Gary Bartlett said, "thanks to the Lucas tool" used to pry apart the car.

Police said a juvenile was charged with driving without a license.

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Planning Board

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Kathy Wacaster, the Town's Community Development Administrator, told the Board she has presented to the aldermen a proposal for a part-time planner--herself.

And Alderman Begley, declaring that the town definitely needs a professional planner, observed, "It boils down to a part-time, in-house planner, or outside assistance."

Several Planners commented that although the new zoning ordinance has been in the creative stage for nearly nine months, they presumed they would have been even further behind had not they had the services of the Land of the Sky Regional Council.

The Planning Board, in the split vote, recommended approving the Land of the Sky Regional Council contract for \$5,000, knowing the aldermen will consider the recommendation along with the proposed part-time planner on the Town's payroll.

In other business, the Planning Board voted, without dissent, to recommend to the Board of Aldermen that Tyson's Furniture Co. be permitted to erect four wall signs on its recently redecorated front, along Broadway and State streets. The signs range in size from five by six feet to 18 by 54 inches, and conform with the draft zoning ordinance.

The Planners also referred

to the Board of Adjustments a request from the First Baptist Church to permit installation of a mobile home on a donated lot on Goldmont street for

housing a church-sponsored family. There were questions concerning the present congestion in the area and sewer capacity.

Registration at Owen High Aug. 13
Preregistration and orientation will be held Friday, Aug. 13 for incoming ninth graders and transfer students in grades 10-12 at Owen High School. Students should report to the school from 9-11 a.m. or 1:30-3:30 p.m. A brief orientation will be given by the principal in the auditorium, followed by a tour of the building and the issuing of class schedules.

Bus transportation will not be provided that day. Parents are invited to stay with their children for the orientation program.

Ongoing students in grades 10-12 may pick up class schedules from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. from their homeroom teachers.

Church fair

The annual Transfiguration Fair will be held at Transfiguration Episcopal Church in Bat Cave on Saturday, August 7 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Arts, crafts, bake sale and concert featuring the Lake Lure Gospel Singers will highlight this year's Fair. All proceeds are given to Christian outreach.

Lecture on love

On Wednesday August 11, the Counseling Center on Merrimon Avenue in Asheville will present a lecture and discussion on "Love and Relationship." The meeting will be held at 549 Merrimon Avenue from 6-7 p.m. There is no charge.

This year's Sourwood Festival will feature an 8 mile hike and overnight camp to the Mt. Mitchell area...the route will follow the historic "Black Mountain-Mt. Mitchell" grade. Hikers will leave Black Mountain at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, August 7th and return Sunday morning (by vehicle). Transportation of heavier equipment is available.

Due to the fragile wilderness environment and limited access space will be limited and pre-registration is required--for further details contact Wendell Begley, Hike Co-ordinator at 669-7991 or 669 9170.

Don't pass up this unforgettable outdoors adventure.

This is one of the events of the Sourwood Festival, sponsored by the Sourwood committee of the Chamber of Commerce.