

THE HUNGRY ONE

The Hungry One went to a concert with 10 friends. After the concert we were all hungry and wanted a nice place with great food. We chose Spago's. What a great time we had. The restaurant is located inside Caesar's Forum. The Cafe, part of the restaurant is outside, and the rest is inside with rooms for private parties upstairs. Spago's has the atmosphere of a sidewalk cafe. People at the small tables outside can watch the crowd of tourists and shoppers passing by, while the artificial light makes the painted sky go from day to evening and back several times during the meal.

Spago was able to accommodate the 10 of us on short notice. Spago's service is always excellent. We ordered a House Smoked Salmon Pizza with Mozzarella, Wild Mushrooms and Red Onion and Chicken Satays with Pickled Cucumbers and Thai Peanut Sauce as appetizers. They were both delicious. The menu changes daily. Usually there are some pasta, vegetarian and fresh fish dishes. If possible try the Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes with Port Wine Sauce. You must save some room for dessert. Spago's has a wonderful pastry or dessert Chef. Sadly the Sunday Jazz which was wonderful is gone. The Hungry One highly recommends Spago's. The restaurant is located inside Caesar's Forum. Dinner reservations in the formal dining room are suggested. For further information call 369-6300.

Museum

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was declared African-American Cultural Arts Festival Week by Gov. Bob Miller two years ago, Walker said.

The event date was conceived to coincide with the celebration of Black History Month.

"First and foremost, our goal is to raise funds to build a permanent site for the museum," she said. "This event is our largest fundraiser."

The museum's collectibles are temporarily being housed for public view at Nika's, 705 W. Van Buren. The items have been on display there since Oct. 26, 1996.

"Hopefully, this year, we'll have our non profit designation, then we can apply for large grants that will help generate that million dollars," said Walker.

Walker has collected over 10,000 pieces for the museum over the last 20 years.

"That's how the Schomburg Center in New York started and how most of the black museums started," she said.

As with past festivals, several of the area's African-American pioneers will be recognized. This year 12 people will be honored for their contributions to West Las Vegas. Thirteen of the area's pioneers were honored at last year's festival.

During opening ceremonies Saturday, the Second Baptist Church Boy Scout Troop will present the colors.

This year's honorees include: Lucille Hughes, a pioneer in business in West Las Vegas since the 1930s; Lynette Boggs-McDonald, Las Vegas' first assistant city manager; Rev. Willie Davis, pastor of the Second Baptist Church and organizer of the first city-wide simultaneous revival; first black building

contractor and the first black graduate of the University of Nevada, Reno; Theron Goynes, retired principal and Nevada's first black Mayor Pro Tempore (City of North Las Vegas).

Others include Ina Dorman, founder of the Clark County School District's Homeless Education Program; Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson-Gates, the county's first black female commissioner, as well as commissioner chair; Elder George Ward, retired school teacher and the first black to serve on the Las Vegas Planning Commission; Bobby Siller, the first black to head the Las Vegas office of the FBI; Dr. Paul Meacham, first black president of a college or university in Nevada (Clark County Community College, now the Community College of Southern Nevada); and Isadore Washington, Jr., the first black Clark County deputy sheriff.

Posthumously honored will be Dr. Roosevelt Fitzgerald, historian and former director of UNLV's Ethnic Studies Program and H.P. Fitzgerald, the area's first black principal.

"We will have local entertainment both days, and a good time will be had by all," Walker said.

A surprise guest from the world of sports will be on hand during Sunday's activities, as a special guest of Vons, she said.

For more information on the Fourth Annual African-American Cultural Arts Festival, or anyone interested in entertaining and sharing their talent with the community is encouraged to call 647-2242 or 599-8130.

"This is the only African-American cultural arts festival in the city," said Walker. "Last year we had a wonderful turnout, and we're expecting even more this time."

Uncle Ben's

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sons with coming up with the concept when they were at the Las Vegas Boulevard location. Nightly he would take the leftover food to the shelters for the homeless.

This past Christmas she believes they fed about 230 people, slightly down from the 300 they served last year.

"We didn't serve as many this past year because there are a lot of other people giving in the community," she said. "But I can really say that we were one of the first businesses to start doing it."

What many people don't know, however, is that it's not

just during the holiday season that Atlene feeds the needy. It's almost daily.

"I feed them any time they come in," she says of the homeless that tend to hang out in front of the restaurant at times.

"There are quite a few that hang out in the front and I try to keep them from doing that, so if they're hungry, I call them in and feed them so they don't disturb the other customers."

This is done on almost a daily basis. Anybody that comes in and says they're hungry and doesn't have money to pay for their food is fed.

"I feed them because God has been so good to me. They

appreciate that," she said.

As for other restaurants that have opened their doors in the community offering a little competition to Uncle Ben's, Atlene said, it doesn't bother her a bit.

"People have a tendency to try different things. I've found out that I may lose them for a little awhile, but nine times out of 10, most of them come back. We're not in a lavish place or a lavish area, we started over on Jackson Street but our roots are over here," she said.

Like any business, though, Uncle Ben's experiences slow days here and there. Atlene takes full advantage of them.

"We have slow times, but it's the slow times that give me a chance to go and pick up items that I need. I can't complain at all. We do a very good business."

She even offers advice to others, especially the youth, who want to become successful in business or life in general.

"If any young people there have a dream, and they want to make something out of their life and be successful, if they make God a part of it, it will work for them," she said.

"I really feel that this is a family dream," she said of the family's 21 years in the business.

"We started with nothing. God has blessed us."

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