

(Left) A bubbly boy clowns around and enjoys his new-found look around his new-found friend. (Bottom) A participant is set to taste some of the succulent soul food served at the first Reggae, Jazz & Soul Food Festival.

Sentinel-Voice photos by John Broussard



Weather boosts festival's success

By Sonya Douglass
Sentinel-Voice

"Man, the Gods just smiled on ya'll," said a young man as he greets Kyle Heckard, part owner of House of Flava, the local retail shop hosting the first annual Reggae, Jazz and Soul Food Festival.

The young man, one of hundreds who attended the festival, was referring to the beautiful weather.

Bright sunlight pierced crystal clear skies during last Sunday's event at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas' Intramural Field.

Brisk winds refreshed the hundreds of families who from noon to 10 p.m. enjoyed the smooth rhythmic sounds

of live jazz and reggae and ate till their hearts' content. People of all ages and skin tones enjoyed a wide variety of culture and conversation.

"We wanted to have something for everyone," said Heckard, 25, of Las Vegas. Heckard and Terry Wade opened the House of Flava, 904 M. Luther King Blvd., last November. The store specializes in urban clothing and music, vintage furniture and deco styling.

Heckard said the festival aimed to give Las Vegas a cultural kick start. "Now is the time to bring the community where it needs to be."

Public and private interests agreed. In addition to families and students,

businesses served as sponsors or as vendors, or both. Nineteen in all were spread about the field.

Local beauty salons braided hair. Another retail vendor did tattoos while popular soul food restaurants cooked up traditional southern goodies like yams, catfish, barbecue and red beans and rice.

When children weren't getting their faces painted or visiting the petting zoo, they enjoyed activities like Planet Jump, an inflatable bubble pit. One Vegas resident described the festival as "a big, giant picnic" and appreciated the opportunity to "do something more than just go to the club."

The lack of community and cultural events is what prompted Terry Wade, the other half of House of Flava, to create the event.

Wade said the festival was designed to help fill the "cultural void in the city" and serve as an alternative to "hanging out in casinos." He wanted to "grab each crowd and bring them together ... have them break bread together."

Last Sunday, Wade's idea became reality. The first Reggae, Jazz and Soul Food Festival was more than just reggae, jazz and soul food. It was a day to relax, enjoy the company of others and indulge in a special kind of food ... food for the soul.

Tempers flare at forum on middle school

By Sandra Fleming
Sentinel-Voice

Passions ran high Tuesday during a community forum held to address the problems at Charles I. West Middle School, 2095 Sapphire Stone.

Clark County Schools superintendent Brian Cram, school board trustee Shirely Barber, District D, and Marzette Lewis, president of the Westside Action Alliance Korp-Uplifting People joined a nine-person panel discussing what parents say are the school's myriad problems: dangerous electrical wiring, poor insulation, faulty alarm systems, inadequate cafeteria services and delinquent supplies.

"I thought the day Dr. Charles I. West Middle School opened its doors would be the happiest day of my life,"

said Lewis who has several children attending the school. She said the school's Sept. 25 opening mocked the effort to get West Las Vegas's first middle school.

She attributed the shoddy construction and equipment delays to racism.

Local activist Eddy Watson agreed. "These are my tax dollars at work," he said. "The computers didn't work, the public announcement system didn't work and my tax dollars paid for all this. This country was built on the backs of our grandfathers; they built these United States, and I come to this school and there are people in the hallways with bullhorns screaming at our kids, I felt that we had gone back in time."

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Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Clark County Schools Superintendent Brian Cram (right) answers questions during Tuesday's forum on the problems at Charles I. West.

Radiothon set to begin this week

By John T. Stephens III
Sentinel-Voice

As the days shorten and the temperatures cool, KCEP FM 88.1 is hoping listeners remain in the summer spirit and supporting the station during its annual Radiothon and Membership Drive Oct. 16 through Oct. 31.

The station — Nevada's only black-owned radio station proprietorship — plans a bevy of fund-raising events and gala affairs to raise money and boost listenership.

The Radiothon begins Oct. 16 at the Hop Night Club. The next day, listeners will get to meet and greet the station's on-air personalities during a luncheon from noon to 2 p.m. Later that night, a fund-raiser party will be held at the Safari Club, 2797 S. Maryland Parkway.

The Sante Fe Hotel and Casino will host a Bowl-a-Thon on Oct. 18. The hotel is located at 4949 N. Rancho Drive.

The Hop Night Club will be the scene of western night Oct. 23. Another fund-raiser party, set for the Safari Club, will take place the next day.

At the New York, New York Hotel on Oct. 25, the station is hosting a dinner and tribute banquet to Jack "The Rapper" Gibson and the Rev. Sam Roberson. Titled, "A Journey Through Black Radio in America," the event will recognize the radio personalities and feature a keynote speech by Al Bell, chief executive officer of Bellmark Records.

Jack "The Rapper" Gibson, who has been called the godfather of black radio, has been a radio personality since 1941. The rev. Sam Roberson's voice has broadcast on radiowaves for 31 years, 19 of those years with KCEP FM 88.1 where he specialized in gospel music programming.

On Oct. 26 the "Praise Our Youth" celebration will be held from 3 pm to 6 p.m. at the Second Baptist Church, 500 Madison Ave. Broadcast live, the ceremony will honor ten young men and women for their contributions to the community. Church youth choirs across the valley will participate and perform.

The station's World Class Talent Showcase on Oct. 30 will (See Radiothon, Page 8)