



Sentinel-Voice photo by Burton Studios

702 vogues for the camera during a record release party.

Local group throws CD release party

Marcello Sawyer
Sentinel Voice

I recently attended a CD release party for local R&B singing sensations 702. The event was held last Thursday at the Motown Café inside the New York New York Hotel and Casino.

After being held up at the door because I wasn't on the "list," I quickly explained my importance in the community and I was let through the velvet rope.

The first thing I noticed as I approached the party was how many teenagers were there. They were on the dance floor and occupying almost every table. I came in thinking this was mostly for the press, since they (702) had had an autograph session earlier that day.

I found a table next to the VIP section. An old friend from high school and some of his homies joined me. I asked them how they got in.

They told me they had made some bootleg armbands to fool the woman at the front table. Friends and family of the group occupied the entire VIP area, which was guarded by unarmed security.

Meelah, Irish and Orish were on hand to represent the group. Every time a member of the group, exited to get food from the buffet line, a starstruck fan would ask for a picture.

Most were turned down, but a few were lucky. One of

Cartoonist —
(Continued from Page 5)
drew a cartoon Klansman saying his group opposes "tying negroes" to truck bumpers because "it could hurt the resale value of the truck."

Some blacks felt the drawing made light of a gruesome hate crime. Thirteen of the 17 members of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus signed a letter requesting an apology from the newspaper.

the guests from VIP summed it up the best when she said; "They're here to have a good time too. They've been signing autographs since two (in the afternoon)."

Radio personalities from Power88 (KCEP 88.1 FM) were on hand. Galaxy Glen and the Love Captain were two that I had seen. Also making appearances were Ms. Black Nevada Rhonda Simmons, Bernard Watson from Channel 13 News, and Kyle Heckard, co-owner of House of Flava.

Everyone was drawn into the relaxed mood except the

two wannabe playas sitting next to me. They believed every girl in the VIP section was looking at them. One had great aspirations, saying he didn't want a picture, he wanted a (telephone) number. I had trouble determining who actually was a VIP, since everyone who looked familiar to the group members was ushered in instantly. It turns out I knew more people in VIP, than in the general area.

Overall the festivities were a great way to relax with some of your friends and be happy that someone from Las Vegas has made it big.

Famed group still sizzles

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

As the curtain rose, lights bathed the stage in an eerie purple glow.

Then, an announcer only had the chance to speak one syllable before the audience cheered wildly, completely drowning him out.

I did make out the last thing he said though: "Earth, Wind and Fire!"

The legendary group, one of the only groups of musicians that started out 30 years ago and still play together to sold out crowds, performed at Caesar's Circus Maximus June 10-13.

On opening night, the fifteen member group packed the stage, donning silver, metallic outfits: original members, guitarist Verdine White, guitarist, vocalist and percussionist Ralph Johnson and vocalist Philip Bailey, were joined by musical director and keyboardist Morris Pleasure, Robert Brookins on keyboards, percussionist David Romero, drummer Gordon Campbell, Ray Brown on trumpet, Reggie Young on trombone and Gary Bias on the saxophone.

Also present during the show were guitarist and



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Local poet Uhware chills with lead singer Philip Bailey.

vocalist Sheldon Reynolds, vocalist and percussionist B. David Whitworth and three dancers, Kelly Jones, Ayesha Orange and Joanna Collins.

"Shining Star", "Fantasy", "Singasong", "Keep Your Head to the Sky"; it all sounded as good as the first time I heard them. Earth, Wind and Fire's music is enduring.

They performed "Got to Get You into My Life", the Beatles cover, for the first time ever and duly tore it up.

Philip Bailey wowed the crowd with his vocal acrobatics. The biggest bundle of energy on stage, without a doubt, was Verdine White, with his flowing hair and wild guitar riffs. He could

barely keep from busting out of his skin, running from front to back, side to side and up and down.

Even when the slow jams played, he would stomp his heel on the floor in place in front of one of the drum sets.

Reynolds represented, singing the parts traditionally sung by Maurice White, the originator of Earth, Wind and Fire. White still works with the group, but grew tired of touring.

"We still work at our show, constantly updating," said Johnson in an interview with the Sentinel-Voice.

"We've added brand new dancers. We have new arrangements. We keep things fresh!"

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