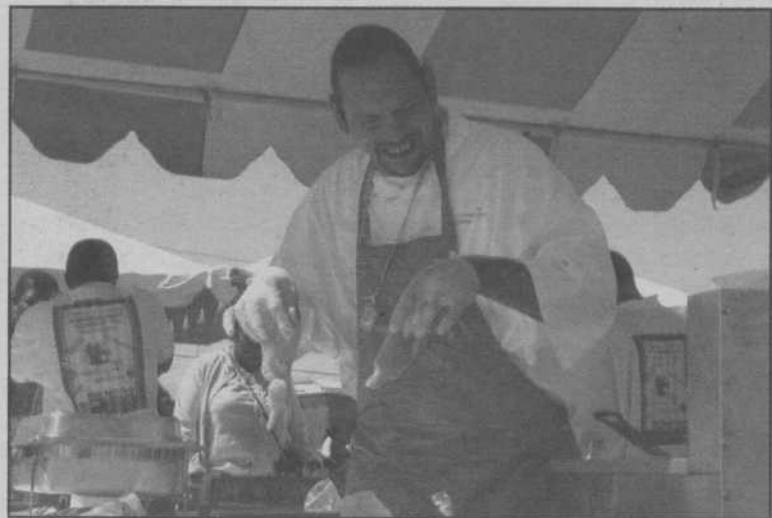


Jubilant Jubilee



It was Christmas in September during Victory Missionary Baptist Church's 3rd Annual "V" Community Jubilee celebration Saturday at the West Las Vegas sanctuary. Above (right) Church step team dancers perform a graceful routine. In the remaining pictures, a food vendor prepares dishes and customers peruse some of the various products for sale.

Sentinel-Voice photos by Ramon Savoy



Ashanti settles matter with her first producer

NEW YORK (AP) - Ashanti and her first producer, Genard Parker, dropped all litigation Tuesday in a contract dispute, ending a trial that began a day earlier.

If any money changed hands, their lawyers refused to talk about it, saying only that everyone was pleased that the bitter battle was over.

Outside court, Alan Kaminsky, a lawyer for Ashanti, called the decision by both sides to drop all litigation "an excellent result."

"I'm very pleased the plaintiff has voluntarily dismissed the case against us," Ashanti said outside court, where she had been scheduled to continue her testimony.

The lawsuits were time-consuming, the 25-year-old singer said, and "I'd rather be in the studio writing."

Parker, the producer who had helped Ashanti record some demo tapes of several songs at his apartment when she was 16, said outside court that he was "happy it's over."

Last year, another jury concluded that Ashanti broke a contract with Parker and owed him \$630,000. U.S. District Judge Jed Rakoff rejected all but \$50,000 of the award on the grounds that the jurors did not have adequate facts to determine damages so they were left to speculate.

The judge's decision led to the new trial, where Parker had been seeking \$2.3 million.

On Monday, Kaminsky told the jury that Ashanti should not have to pay Parker anything because he had no role in her career after he released her from his contract so she could sign with another company.

Although the release called for Parker to receive money from the company for her first three albums, the company eventually rejected Ashanti and no records were made.

Later, she met Irv Gotti and worked with Murder Inc. to produce music for three records that sold 6 million copies, Ashanti testified.


"Ashanti," her debut album, won a Grammy Award for best contemporary R&B album. The singer, whose full name is Ashanti Douglas, recently played a cheerleader in the film "John Tucker Must Die."

Usher extends 'Chicago' play


NEW YORK (AP) - The razzle-dazzle of Usher will continue for an extra two weeks. The silky-voiced R&B star, who made his Broadway debut in the revival of "Chicago," will now stay in the show through Oct. 14. He originally was set to leave the John Kander-Fred Ebb-Bob Fosse musical Oct. 1.

The show has done boffo business since Usher joined the cast Aug. 22, playing conning lawyer Billy Flynn. Last week, "Chicago" grossed \$728,907, playing to more than 97 percent of capacity at the Ambassador Theatre.


The current cast includes Bianca Marroquin as Roxie Hart, Brenda Braxton as Velma Kelly, Roz Ryan as Matron Mama Morton, Rob Bartlett as Amos Hart and R. Lowe as Mary Sunshine.



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