

Supper club in Sussex serves up a final tune

By RON MARSICO

Behind the quaint and enthusiastic renditions from generations of Broadway musicals at Lovey's Showcase in Byram there was an undeniable sadness last week among the performers who double as singers and waiters.

A lack of patrons forced the Route 206 establishment to shut down last night after 14 years as a supper club, which offered patrons song with food and gave professional singers a start or chance to support fledgling careers.

While Lovey's half-dozen male and female performers will continue limited supper club and other musical work at Randolph's Seafood Shak, they all believe an era has ended.

It sure beats working for a living, said Ralph Wallace, a five-year veteran who tended bar and served meals between performances. "It's given me some place to be good and bad, and a place to work my craft."

We do Readers Digests of shows," continued Wallace, speaking Thursday during the final performance for senior citizens. "It's almost like doing dinner-theater. Sometimes you get great audiences, sometimes you get terrible audiences. It's just like anywhere else."

Not quite. At the entrance are photographs of past and present performers and a framed picture of the last singers and restaurant staff, including the dishwasher. The wood-paneled walls sport posters from some of Broadway's most famous shows. An ebony piano sits on a small platform stage in the front of the dining area, bathed in colored lights hung from the ceiling beneath a reflective canopy.

Aline Lux, membership director of the New Jersey Restaurant Association, said she does not believe there is another restaurant of Lovey's type in the state, although there are some in New York.

An easy camaraderie was evident among the performers, not only during the songs, but as they took orders, en-



Bartender Ralph Wallace belts out a song for the luncheon crowd at Lovey's Showcase in Byram

couraged each singer from the sidelines and joked during breaks.

"This is our social life," said Hilary Colton, a trained opera singer who was the newest performer, even after three years at the club. "We're all friends. I can let my hair down here and sing things I'm not supposed to."

"It's sad that it's closing," said John Smith, the full-time piano player who pitches in occasionally as a waiter. "But I'm really glad I stayed to the very end. There's just so much history and fun that's been had here."

As songs from classic shows like "Cabaret" and "My Fair Lady" were played, the audience was encouraged to join in with singing and dancing. The singing waiters and waitresses left their mark with the senior citizens present.

"I haven't seen anything like this

for quite some time," said Frank Coletto, who attended with his Long Island senior citizens club and was the object of flirtation during one singer's rendition of "Ain't Misbehavin'." "And when I say quite some time, I mean back to the early 1900s."

In the rear of the club, Emma Muller enjoyed the lunch and music with a few of her friends from a Lincoln Park senior citizens club.

"It's special," said Muller. "It just warms you up. You entertain with the entertainers. It makes you feel young."

Muller's friend, Mildred Stevens, thinks her age group is the best suited to appreciate the performers' music.

"It's our generation," Stevens said. "We grew up with all this music, not rock 'n' roll."

Wallace, the bartender-even, likes performing for seniors best—ever-

though the night parties for more diverse crowds pay better.

"They're a captive audience," Wallace said. "They know they aren't getting on the bus until the show is done." The kind of performances by the Lovey's entertainers, he said, is "lost on today's music video world."

But the singers note their craft is not always appreciated by patrons, who are sometimes uninterested in the show and the difficulties their hosts have carrying both plates and tunes.

Wallace said he had sung his heart out and then hoped for compliments. "You go to the table and they say, 'Can we have some more bread, please?'"

In succeeding sentences, Wallace would ask the piano player, "What's up next?" and then turn to another colleague and ask, "Are we done with soups yet?"

The performances at Lovey's were the brainchild of owner Lillian Bruno.

"Let's just say I was a frustrated singer, and I finally had the opportunity to follow a dream in my own restaurant," said Bruno. "This was an evening. I'd like to say if you have company you don't know too well, you bring them here. You don't have to talk."

Unfortunately, Bruno continued, "It was successful artistically, economically it was not." She speculated that Lovey's style had run its course in rural Sussex County, and is hopeful that it will be rekindled in more populous Morris County. She noted the Byram establishment's downstairs cafe will remain open until the entire restaurant is reopened under a new format this fall.

Bruno said she is allowing the singers to perform occasionally at her financially successful Seafood Shak as a reward for their loyalty through the years. In addition to supper club performances for senior citizens, they will do coffee house routines and song and piano presentations.

Despite this, Bruno is disappointed by the closing of Lovey's. "It's going to be very sad for us," she said. "It was like one big family."

E. Orange prepares for Caribbean fest

By KEVIN DILWORTH

Everything is set for Saturday's second annual International African-Caribbean Carnival, parade, concert and food festival in East Orange, according to its organizers.

Several thousand people are expected to attend the weekend event that will feature several reggae and salsa bands, as well as floats and dance groups, according to Milton L. Martin, city director of community affairs.

The event will kick off with a 10 a.m. parade starting in Orange Park on Central and Oakwood avenues in neighboring Orange.

The parade, featuring seven floats, will proceed west on Central Avenue into East Orange and south on South Arlington Avenue to Elmwood Park.

In the park, Martin explained, various musical acts will perform. And numerous African and Caribbean foods, as well as arts, crafts and souvenir shirts, will be sold there.

Each parade float will carry a band or musical group.

Martin said two Haitian musical groups, Sakad and Mecaya, will perform, as will a Latin group called Sierk, a Jamaican ensemble named Los Sonidos; a Connecticut group called the Hartford Steel Band, and a New York City group called Venum.

Also, he said, there will be four East Orange-based groups: Charles Johnson/Rapture; the Robert Banks Combo; the James H. Orange, and Solid Gold.

The daylong carnival, sponsored by the city and groups called the Caribbean Carnival Committee Inc. and the Caribbean Cultural Circle, is free and open to the public.

Last Sept. 5, more than 5,000 people—many of whom have family roots in Africa, Antigua, Bar-

bados, Bermuda, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Nassau, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Tobago and the U.S. Virgin Islands—attended the affair.

The East Orange City Council approved \$29,000 in funding to underwrite the carnival.

After the carnival closes, there will be a Caribbean musical festival that follows it at Martens Stadium on North Clinton Street, off Park Avenue.

The evening music fest, scheduled to run from 6 to 10, will feature nine artists who perform mainly reggae music. Advance admission tickets are \$17. Tickets will be sold for \$20 at the gate.

That evening event, sponsored by the Caribbean Carnival Committee Inc., will honor Mayor John C. Hatcher Jr. "for his community support," according to Patrick Smith, one of the organizers and a radio personality at WNYK-FM in Newark.

Martin and Henry said the musical acts at Martens Stadium will be headlined by the "Mighty Sparrow" from Trinidad and "Yellow Man" from Jamaica.

The other artists, they added, are "Invader," the St. Lucian artist who sings "Walk and Wine;" the "Shadow," the Trinidadian artist who sings "Tension" and "Bad Boy Peter," and Winston Soso, the St. Vincent artist who sings "Woman With Big Bottom."

Also, Winston Jones, the Jamaican singer who sings "That's All She Gotta Be;" singer Papa Elijah from Guyana; the "Caribbean Express" ensemble from New York City; and singer Rula Brown from Jamaica.

According to Smith, all the musical acts will be backed up by "Exodus," a six-member reggae band.

Drug dealers hit hard by Orange crackdown

A crackdown against drug traffickers in Orange is continuing, according to Police Director Charles Cobbert.

He said 11 people, including a juvenile, were the latest to be arrested on charges involving possession and sale of cocaine.

The arrests, made by members of the vice squad, the Essex County Sheriff Department's Bureau of Narcotics and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, between Aug. 18 and Thursday, Cobbert said.

The director identified the suspects—all Orange residents except one—as Desiree Sutton, 27, of William Street and a 15-year-old city boy from Park Street. Both individuals were taken into custody at William Street and Glenwood Avenue.

Sutton, who has no known occupation, was charged with possessing cocaine, selling cocaine and conspiracy to violate the state's narcotics laws. Cobbert said the juvenile was charged with possessing cocaine and possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute.

Shawn Austin, 18, an unemployed High Street resident, was arrested at Park and Ward streets on charges of possessing cocaine, possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute and eluding the police.

Cobbert added that Lawrence Marable Jr., 24, an unemployed Gray Street resident, was arrested outside one of the city's housing projects on Mechanic Street and charged with cocaine possession, drug possession with the intent to distribute, and drug possession with the intent to distribute it within 1,000 feet of a school.

Al-Tariq Williamson, 21, an un-

employed South Centre Street resident, was arrested in front of a Mechanic Street residence on charges of possessing both cocaine and marijuana, Cobbert continued.

Gary Majette, 21, a laborer who lives on Mechanic Street, was arrested outside his residence on charges of possessing cocaine; Auburn Hinton, 20, of Ward Street, was arrested at William Street and Glenwood Avenue for possessing cocaine and possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute, and Tina Wright, 21, of South Centre Street, was taken into custody on Ward Street on charges of possessing cocaine, possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute "and using a juvenile to distribute drugs," Cobbert said.

Additionally, the police director continued, Robert McCarrow, 20, of Lakeside Avenue, was arrested at Lincoln Avenue and New England Terrace on cocaine possession charges, and Alexandria Ellis, 27, of New Street, was taken into custody during a drug raid at her home. She was charged with cocaine possession, cocaine possession with the intent to distribute, possession of drug paraphernalia and conspiracy to violate the state's narcotics laws.

One noncity resident, Jackie Odom, 35, of Lenox Avenue in East Orange, was arrested at William Street and Glenwood Avenue in Orange on charges of selling cocaine.

Cobbert said all of the adult suspects were jailed, pending municipal court arraignments on the various drug trafficking charges. The juvenile, he added, was sent to the Essex County Youth House in Newark.

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