International Festival Back to Harrisonburg

By Jenna Martin
Staff Writer

Harrisonburg is hosting its own International Festival this Saturday, Sept. 20, from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. The sixth annual event will take place at Hillandale Park. Those attending will experience the rich diversity of the local community. The price is perfect, too. No admission will be charged.

Hillandale Park is going to be transformed into a whirlwind of sights, sounds, smells, and tastes from around the world. The park will be divided into a large and small stage, plus an interactive area and playground. Main performances will be located on the large stage. Music from the Andes will also take the stage.

A major highlight of the festival is Kurdish dancing, which takes place around the large stage from 3:00 p.m. to 6 p.m. Audience members join hands and learn the dance together. A variety of interactive activities will take place on the small stage. Experience the thrill of learning a folk dance, learning to play drums from around the world, and attempting to master the art of juggling. Folk storytellers of Native American, Appalachian, and African background will also lend their talents.

Attendees can enjoy making works of art from around the globe in a craft area for all ages. Visitors have the opportunity to construct folk art, construct Kofi paper hats originating from Ghana, make Japanese fish prints, craft Mexican paper flowers, create origami, and make friendship flag bracelets. There will also be a face painting booth. Other activities throughout the day include breaking piñatas, making African peanut butter, and ethnic playground games for children and the young at heart.

The highlight of the festival is the international cuisine. Tastes from all corners of the globe can be sampled and savored. Restaurants represented will be Taste of Thai, Saigon Café, Blue Nile Cuisine for Ethiopian food lovers, El Coquino (Puerto Rican), Musica Caribbean Cuisine, Moores Mexican Bakery and Guzman Mexican Restaurant. All these ethnic food vendors have a variety of choices from appetizers to desserts to full meals. Most full meals will cost around five dollars.

Local volunteer, chairperson of the event for the past 3 years, is extremely excited about the festival. “We are celebrating the fact that we are an international community,” she said. “Our goals are the three E’s: Entertain, Educate, and Eat. Our community is changing so fast we need to educate ourselves and share what we have and who we are, and learn about our neighbors.”

Many EMU students will be volunteering at the event along with other area students. Deanna Durham, our Community Life Center coordinator, commented about the importance of students getting involved in the Harrisonburg community church groups and students to learn who lives here and how to give back,” said Durham.

The International Festival promises to be a worthwhile evening. In years past it has attracted a huge crowd numbering 8,000-10,000 people. “We invite the community to come out and feel like they belong to something much bigger,” said Brown.

Bluegrass Music Fills Broadway High School

By Grete Horst
Staff Writer

Local people with a taste for bluegrass music filled the Broadway High School auditorium on a drizzly Saturday afternoon this past weekend to hear toe tapping tunes and sweet melodies.

The annual Valley Bluegrass Festival, sponsored by the Broadway Homestead Partnership, invited six Shenandoah Valley bluegrass bands to compete for 25 hours of recording time at Blue Ridge Recording. There was no fancy lighting or fog machine, but the audience enjoyed the music of older adults, those who had been raised publicly for the event and came to support the lesser-known local groups.

Notin’ Fancy was following by Daphna Creek, South River Gospel & Bluegrass, All4Hymn, Mountain Boys, Heartland, and Walnut Ridge Boys. I was struck by the eclectic song combinations from Daphna Creek, who switched from a folk tune called “Salty Dog” to a gospel number, “Will there be any Stars in my Crown?” Both songs were well received by the audience. All4Hymn stood out from the rest with their polished sound, stage presence and solid numbers in which the female vocalist glided through several gospel melodies with a sweet bluegrass timbre to her voice while the instrumentalists played a gentle underlying harmony.

Although there appeared to be a greater age diversity within the bands than within the audience, who was comprised mainly of older adults, those who came to enjoy the music were diverse on another level; from the man dressed in gray camouflage on the right to a Mennonite church song leader and her family on the left.

When finally no more barbeque sandwiches, hot dogs, and hamburgers could be sold, and a few that were left could be sold, the audience members left with full stomachs and souls.

What’s Up in the ’Burg?

Saturday, September 20
- “Pieces,” JMU experimental theatre. Original play written by Janeine Berryman. 12:00 a.m.
- International Festival: 12-6 p.m., Hillandale Park
  - Port Republic String Band- Virginia Roots Music
  - Charlottesville African Drum Choir
  - Mystic Warriors-Music of the Andeans
  - Turkish Dancing
  - 29th Annual Apple Harvest Festival at Jim Barnett Park: Winchester. Country music, Virginia State apple butter making contest from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. (540) 662-3996 for more information.
  - 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
  - 11:00 a.m. Joe Pettus and the Fabulous Soul Shakers

Sunday, September 21
- Open Mike Night: 8:00 - 11:00 p.m., Dave’s Tavern
- Dayton Farmers’ Market Dayton, Va. Open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Wednesday, September 24
- “Stitches.” 8:00 p.m. JMU experimental theater.