

## UMOJA/Unity Festival

**Umoja**

Unity Festival

August 8-9, 2008



Freedom Hall Civic  
Center Grounds

Johnson City, TN  
37601

The 12<sup>th</sup> UMOJA/Unity festival will take place August 8-9, 2008, on the grounds of Freedom Hall Civic Center in Johnson City, Tn. It will include music, African drumming and dancing, Shaka Zulu stilt walkers, storytellers, food and craft vendors, medical screening, children's carnival, and much, much more!

Musical entertainment will be diverse, with Jazz, Gospel, R & B, Mariachi and Motown review. There will be musical entertainment throughout the two days of the festival.

The origins of the festival go back to August 8, 1863, the day that Andrew Johnson freed his slaves in Greenville, Tn. This date became emancipation day for East Tennessee freed men and was celebrated with picnics and music.

Unity Day began in 1978 when the local NAACP, Concerned Citizens Group, Herb Greenlee and other community residents started the unity picnic. The picnic was held around August 8<sup>th</sup> of each year and included food, covered dishes (furnished by participants), games, reminiscing and fun. After several years, for whatever

reason, the community event stopped.

In 1997, the aforementioned founders decided to revive the event, but with a different format. At that time, cities around Johnson City were hosting annual cultural festivals and events. This subsequently became the format for what is now known as the Umoja/Unity Festival.

In 2004 due to heavy flooding at the Carver Recreation Center the festival was moved to the civic center where it has grown bigger and more diverse every year. The Umoja festival partnered with East Tennessee State University department of Education storytelling program in 2005 to bring the diversity of international storytellers to the program.

The Umoja/Unity Festival is the region's largest celebration of ethnic diversity and the universal love of life. It was established to eliminate the barriers of race and cultures: the event is a two-day celebration of life.

Umoja is Swahili for "Unity": unity is to be in harmony, and of an accord to combine and to include all. Unity is the heart of this regional event with a history

of more than a decade of successful celebrations. Umoja is the first of the seven principles of the celebration of Kwanzaa, which reflects the best qualities and characteristics of the harvest festivals celebrated throughout Africa.

NO admission fee is required but donations are welcome.

## FRIDAY AUGUST 8

Friday August 8 at 5pm the opening ceremony will start with “call to the drums” with Shaka Zulu, stilt walkers from New Orleans.

The master of ceremony for the festival is Paul Fall, from Johnson City.



Starting at 5:30 p.m. we will have our first entertainers, the M. J. Becks Band. This group of nine members are based in Johnson City, Tn. The band formed to offer positive and inspiring dance music, primarily from the 60s, 70s, and 80s. Highlighting music from the Eagles, Santana, Chicago, The Beatles, Motown, country, and contemporary Christian. The Becks passion is to move you to your feet and to another place in time.



Next we will have Diane Ferlatte, international storyteller, takes the stage at 6:30 pm. As a youngster Diane was steeped in the oral tradition. Her early childhood years in Louisiana were spent on her grandparents porch with the family and neighbors swapping stories, lies, and tales. After moving to California as an adolescent, Diane has fond memories of the Annual trek back to Louisiana with her family, where she recalls fishing in the bayou, making hoecake bread, singing, and storytelling.

The seed for her storytelling career was planted in 1980. Committed to breaking her four year old son from watching tv too much and increasing his readiness for school, Diane started to story read/tell in the style for which she is so well known today, i.e., dynamic characterization with animation, expression, and interaction.

Diane has wowed audiences across the globe from Austria to New Zealand, including Holland, France, Bermuda, Sweden, Canada, Australia, Singapore, and Malaysia. Diane has visited almost every state in the U. S., to perform at major festivals theaters, and conferences. She continues to focus on the school and libraries as much as possible.

A new group, Justis takes the stage at 7:15 p.m. They were recently formed in Johnson City and their musical genre is Jazz and R & B.

At 8:15 p.m. one of the favorite performers will take the stage. Shake Zulu. Zulu Connection, one of the country's finest and most popular performing arts companies was born in the capital of music and culture: New Orleans, Louisiana. Masters of the African form of stilt dancing and ancient mystical masquerades, Zulu Connection spellbinds its audiences with colorful and elaborate costumes, tremendous heights, extraordinary acrobatics, and magnificent dance moves. The highly rhythmic music that accompanies each performance has been characterized as captivating and invigorating, pushing most audience members to get up and dance.

Since its inception in 1990, the company has pioneered the emergence of works by both African and African-American choreographers and has been dedicated to preserving the rich culture of Africa, the Caribbean, and Haiti, which are all inherent in the make-up of New Orleans culture. Founders Shaka and Na'imah Zulu are committed to expose audiences to the cultural arts of these nations in order to foster cross-cultural appreciation and understanding across the U. S., Canada, Europe, and Bermuda.



Shaka and his group has performed at the Jazz & Heritage festival in New Orleans, Kuumbaa Festival in Knoxville, Black Dance USA in St. Louis, Goombay Festival in Hamilton, Bermuda, England Arts Festival in Liverpool, England, The Point After Festival in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and The UMOJA/Unity Festival in Johnson City, Tn.

At 9:15 p.m. the evenings showcase group, Zapp Band, takes the stage. Zapp Band was a soul and funk band formed in 1978 by the Troutman brothers: Roger, Larry, Lester, tony, and Terry "Zapp". Zapp had hits like "More Bounce to the Ounce", "Doowa Ditty", "I Can Make You Dance", "Heartbreaker", among others.

The group became defunct after the April 25, 1999, deaths of Roger and Larry Troutman. New members have been added and today the band members are Terry "Zapp" Troutman, Lester Troutman, Dale DeGroat, Ricardo Bray, Bart "Sure 2 B" Thomas, and Robert "BiGG RoBB" Smith.

Saturday August 9, 2008

Saturday's festivities begin with a parade which starts from Northside Elementary School, North Roan Street and East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The starting time for the parade is 10:00 a.m. The Shriners color guard and bagpipers will lead the parade. They will also have their go-carts performing. There will be some of the classic and antique cars, Shaka Zulu, Elvis, The Mariachi Band, and other entries will be part of the parade. The Parade will end at Carver Rec Center.



On Saturday there is "The Mr. Bill and Bodie Show" as part of our children's program. Its music, magic, balloons, bubbles, puppetry, and of course Bodie the piano playing dog. Mr. Bill has a very unique and interactive show that is fun and educational. Mr. Bill's Show (William Sherrill) has a lot of clapping, jumping, parading, singing, and just plain fun for all the children.

Bodie performs tricks including roll over, shaking hands, dancing, high-fives, and "sings on cue to songs he plays on his piano.

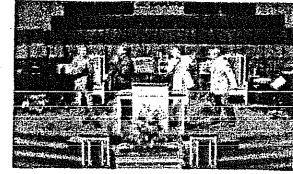
There are several events that will be ongoing all day Saturday. They are:

1. A Health fair with "FREE" screening's is a part of this year's festival and Will be open from 12 noon until 5:00 p.m. The health fair and screening's Are being done by Mountain State Health Alliance and the Minority Health Center.
2. An antique/classic car show, a first time event, will start at 1:00 p.m. and last until 6:00 p.m. Saturday The show is open to cars, trucks, and motorcycles. The vehicle MUST be registered, due to limited space.
3. Hands On Museum will have events during the entire day on Saturday.
4. Juan Hill will DJ for the teens and young adults, playing a selection of rap, hip-hop and other musical selections. The DJ will be playing Music both Friday and Saturday.
5. The Mr. Bill and Bodie Show will be performing throughout Saturday. Music. Magic, balloons, games and other events.
6. The Children's Carnival will be 4:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Saturday.
7. EMBARQ will sponsor face painting in their tent both Friday and Saturday.

There are two events starting Saturday's program at 1:00 p.m. One is the antique/classic car show, which continues until 6:00 p.m. There is no entry fee to show a car, truck or motorcycle and this is not a judged event. All vehicles must be registered due to limited space. To register call Wayne Robertson at (423) 232-6219.

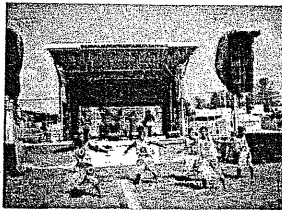
The second event is the Gospel Feast which also begins at 1:00 p.m. There will be several "Praise" teams from various churches in the Tri-Cities

area. Also performing is "The American Quartet". They were formed in January, 2000. Their members are Roger Queen: founder, lead. Roger lives in Forest City, N.C.; Clarence Bailey: bass, lives in Erwin, Tn.; Rick Strickland: tenor, lives in Knoxville, Tn.; Darrin Lovelace: baritone, lives in Harris, N.C.



Before forming the American Quartet, each member performed either solo or with other groups. The American Quartet sings a Southern style of Gospel music.

Two of our groups have performed at the UMOJA festival for several years and are very popular with the audiences. They are Shaka Zulu and the Watoto Drummers & Dancers and they will be performing together at 3:30 p.m.



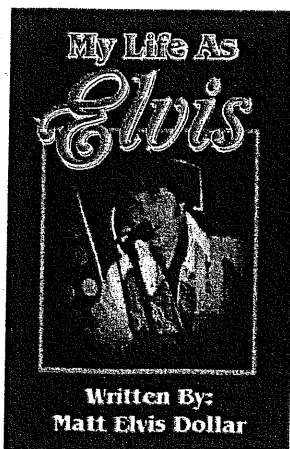
dancing style.

The Watoto Dancers & Drummers are from Knoxville, Tn., where they teach dancing and drumming to children in the greater Knoxville area. They also are a feature at the Kuumbaa festival that takes place every June. "Watoto" will present African expressions through their drumming and

We are again happy to present a band that has performed for several years at the UMOJA festival, the Mariachi Band, "MOMBRA DE MEXICO". They are from Hendersonville, N.C. The group consists of five members, headed by Jose and Leon Amador, who play the fiddle, guitar, Spanish



guitar, and trumpets. They have the sounds of the "Tijuana Brass". The Mariachi Band performs at 4:00 p.m.



"Elvis" is in the house! Matt "Elvis" Dollar, a repeat UMOJA performer, who hails from Bristol, Tn., again wows us with his "swivel hips" and "hound dog" hits from his idol Elvis Presley. "Elvis" will begin at 5:00 p.m. with a show you will long remember. Matt has performed at several festivals, fairs, senior centers functions, parties and other events over the years. You will be thoroughly entertained up until the time that "Elvis leaves the building".



At 6:00 p.m., Johnson City's own "Heartbeats" will be the center of everyone's attention. The Heartbeats have been entertaining us for several years with a lively Motown selection. The group members are Joe Bradley, George Bristol, Robert Taylor, and James Bradley.

The festival will have the Children's Carnival again this year. The carnival will run from 4:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. It will feature several large blow-up slides bounce sites and other games.

The Watoto Drummers & Dancers will hold a workshop at 6:00 p.m., in one of the tents in the craft vendors area. They will be demonstrating the various styles of dance and drumming, explaining their meaning and techniques.

At 6:45 p.m. Watoto will join Shaka Zulu and his group, on the grounds in front of the stage, for stilt walking, drumming, and dancing.

Whild Peach will take the stage at 7:30 p.m.. Forming in Dallas, Texas, Whild Peach made the move to Atlanta, Ga., in 1994 and started on the show circuit hitting the biggest venues in the city.



Whild Peach, a hip-hop band has spent the last ten years working on projects with Goodie Mob/Joi/Cool Breeze/Lil' Will/Khujo Goodie/Sleepy Brown/the Ali moviesoundtrack/the Scooby-Doo soundtrack and most notable among these efforts is their collaboration with Outkast, becoming the backup band on Outkast,s tours.

The band has started a busy touring schedule of their own playing at colleges, nightclubs, concert venues, and festivals all over the U.S.



The festival's Saturday premier act begins their performance at 9:00 p.m.

They are the one and only "Plunky & Oneness".

Plunky & Oneness is one of the most enduring and versatile funk, jazz, Afro-fusion groups of all time. The group has been described as "the missing link between Pharoah Sanders and Kool & the Gang"! The band has been performing for more than 30 years and they still have a funky fresh sound as evidenced by their 2004 concerts with Earth Wind & Fire and SOS Band.

Every Plunky & Oneness concert is a festive carnival. A party with a purpose.

Led by saxophonist J. Plunky Branch, who has released 20 albums of original avant-garde jazz, funk, soul, fusion, gospel, and African music "Forever in A Moment" is the group's new smooth, urban jazz CD.

Plunky & Oneness has performed at numerous festivals, including: the National Blacks Arts Festival, Atlanta, Ga.; the Hampton Jazz Festival, Hampton, Va.; and at the World's Fair in New Orleans. The group has toured in Africa and Europe, with three headline performances at London's famed Jazz Café. They have opened concerts for some of the biggest names in Black music, including: Earth Wind & Fire, Patti LaBelle, B. B. King, Ray Charles, Frankie Beverly & Maze, Sun Ra, The Isley Brothers, and Roy Ayers. In addition to their performances at the National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C.; the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Va., and at Alice Tully Hall at the Lincoln Center in New York, Plunky & Oneness enjoys the intimacy and loyalty of smaller venues in their native Mid-Atlantic region. They also performed at the local UMOJA fund raiser in Johnson City, Tn., in April 2008.

Plunky & Oneness members include: J. Plunky Branch, sax and vocals; Tonya Lazenby-Jackson, keyboards and vocals; Chris Beasley, guitar; P. Muzi Branch, bass; Corey Burch, drums and African master drummer, Asante from Ghana, West Africa who formerly played with Fleetwood Mac, Paul Simon, and Lonnie Liston Smith.

At the end of Plunky & Oneness will be the closing ceremonies.

Visit our vendors for an excellent selection of foods, ice cream, fish, and other delights. We also have a large selection of craft vendors on Hand.

**DO NOT BRING FOOD OR DRINKS WITH YOU.**

**PETS ARE NOT ALLOWED. SERVICE DOGS ARE AN EXCEPTION.**

**\*\*\*NOTICE\*\*\* ABSOLUTELY NO ALCOHOL IS ALLOWED!**

The UMOJA Festival is a family and children orientated event!

For additional information call (423) 426-2851 or visit our website at [umojajc.com](http://umojajc.com).

To register vehicles for the car show call Wayne Robertson at (423) 232-6219. You must register your vehicle since space is limited to about 100 spaces.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### FRIDAY AUGUST 8

Opening ceremonies - call of the drums

With Shaka Zulu	5:00 p.m.
The M. J. Becks Band	5:30 p.m.
Storytelling (Diane Ferlatt)	6:30 p.m.
Justis	7:15 p.m.
Shaka Zulu	8:15 p.m.
Zapp Band	9:15 p.m.

### SATURDAY AUGUST 9

Parade	10:00 a.m.
Juan Hall (DJ)	
Health Fair (Free Screenings)	12:00 Noon-5:00 p.m.
Classic/Antique Car Show	1:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.
Gospel Feast	1:00 p.m.
Shaka Zulu with Watoto Dancers & Drummers	3:30 p.m.
Mariachi Band (SOMBRA DE MEXICO)	4:00 p.m.
Children's Carnival	4:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
Elvis (Matt Dollar)	5:00 p.m.
Heartbeats	6:00 p.m.
Workshop with Watoto Dancers & Drummers	6:00 p.m.
Shaka Zulu with Watoto Dancers & Drummers	6:45 p.m.
Whild Peach	7:30 p.m.
Plunky & Oneness	9:00 p.m.
Closing Ceremonies	At end of Plunky concert

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE BUT DONATIONS WOULD BE APPRECIATED.  
\*\*NOTICE\*\* NO FOOD, DRINKS OR PETS ALLOWED

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# Umoja Unity Festival



**August 8 - 9, 2008**

## Friday

Opening Ceremony ..... 5:00 pm  
Call of the drums with Shaka Zulu  
The M.J. Becks Band ..... 5:30 pm  
Storytelling..... 6:30 pm  
Justis ..... 7:15 pm  
Shaka Zulu ..... 8:15 pm  
Zapp Band..... 9:15 pm

## Saturday

Parade..... 10:00 am  
Health Fair (Free Screenings)  
..... 12:00-5:00 pm  
Classic & Antique Car Show  
..... 1:00-6:00 pm  
Gospel Fest..... 1:00 pm  
Shaka Zulu with Watoto Dancers  
& Drummers ..... 3:30 pm  
Mariachi Band..... 4:00 pm  
Elvis..... 5:00 pm  
Heartbeats..... 6:00 pm  
Children's Carnival ..... 4:00-9:00 pm  
Workshop with Watoto Dancers  
& Drummers ..... 6:00 pm  
Shaka Zulu with Watoto Dancers  
& Drummers ..... 6:45 pm  
Whild Peach ..... 7:30 pm  
Plunky & Oneness..... 9:00 pm

*Schedule Subject to Change  
No Pets Allowed*