



'Maynard Ferguson has been down and back more than most men ...'

LEISURE / ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION



Maynard is back!

... and his horn still sounds very good

Photos, text by Doug Thompson

He's heavier now and the black curly hair is mostly gray, but as this energetic trumpet player comes on stage at West Junior High School in Alton and starts blowing that horn, you realize that Maynard Ferguson can still handle great jazz.

Ferguson has been up and down more times than most men and the year's of battle show on his face. But now he is back, again, with a new band from England and on Tuesday night, he showed 1,066 persons that he is still good.

Ferguson's band was put together in England, where he lives now, and includes musicians from Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States.

His style is different now, more contemporary and with adaptations of pop music, including, at a time when flood waters threatened the area, a version of Simon and Garfunkle's "Bridge over Troubled Waters."

Tuesday night's concert was to benefit the Alton high school bands, but the small attendance means the event will probably lose some money or just barely break even.

"We were hurt by it being election night," Emerson Shultz, conductor of the Alton High symphonic band, said. "We simply goofed. When we set the date, we did not realize that April 3 was election night."

But those who did come, jazz enthusiasts and musicians, saw a show that should have thrilled many more.

Because Maynard Ferguson is back, and even if big bands aren't what they used to be, they are still a long way from dead.



a personal opinion ...



doug THOMPSON

Post mortem ...

Paul A. Lenz shook hands with the multitude of well-wishers, friends and party goers who stopped by the Stratford Hotel Tuesday night as that entertainment spectacle of city elections finally ended.

They all wanted to shake the hand of this man who is returning to four more years as mayor of the city and, suddenly, all the animosity of a hard campaign vanished and everyone seemed happy.

Earlier that day, while the polls were still open, Lenz sat in his office and said he wasn't sure how the vote for mayor would go.

"I wish I could say that I'm sure that I will win, but I can't say that. We tried to run a low-key campaign, but it has not been an easy campaign. I feel the race was very uptight at times and I wish that it had not been that way."

As campaigns go, Alton's was no big deal. Instead of issues, it became a campaign of personalities.

Meanwhile

On Tuesday night, the waiting was over and the Sky Room of the Stratford Hotel, where the PR and Ad Club presented results, was filled with politicians, reporters, hangers-on and partygoers who knew that, when an election is over, there is a party.

Lenz waited in his fifth floor room until the results were obvious, showing him to be a clear winner over Clyde H. Wiseman. Then, he headed downstairs to the Sky Room with his family to shake hands and rejoice in the victory.

Not so happy

Up the street, at the Flamingo Motel, Wiseman looked dejected and was consoled by his wife.

At the Stratford, Lenz kissed his wife amid the cheers and tinkle of ice in drinks.

On the Election Central projection screens behind the mayor, the story was clear:

Lenz wins over Wiseman; several upsets in the council race; both black councilmen defeated; and a surprise to some. The analysis on the floor is the same as after all elections.

"Well, it was Walker's endorsement that killed Wiseman," or "the racial overtones hurt him." The comments are the same, just the names are different.

One screen shows Graham Watt, Alton's one and only city manager, has four write-in votes for mayor. His name was suggested as a joke the week before because the mayor's campaign lacked humor. Some people laughed and four voted.

Lenz shakes hands, talks over the radio, smiles for photographers and tells everybody that it is a very happy night for him.

At the Flamingo, Wiseman shakes hands, shrugs his shoulders and thanks those who have supported him. It is very quiet.

At the Stratford, it is very noisy because this is where the winner is and the party people like to be where the winner is.

If Wiseman had won, many of this same crowd would have been at the Flamingo partying with him. Tonight, it is the victory, the party and the fun.

Tomorrow, and reality, came later. That's the way it is in politics.

