



Showing Off

Versatility, intellect, talent and beauty: 15-year-old Keecie Tobias has it all (photo by James Parker).

Young & Gifted

Tobias: Versatility her trademark

By AUDREY L. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Three years ago, Stephanie Tobias was busy making plans for her wedding, but choosing gowns for her bridesmaids was made easier when her younger sister, Keecie, then 13, came to her aid.

"Really, what I did was just make a model on my Barbie doll and I later drew a picture of it and the gowns were made from them," says Keecie, now 15.

Keecie, her parents, her grandmother and her 14-year-old brother live in a spacious ranch-style home on Old Rural Hall Road. Acting as the lady of the house until her mother arrives from work, Keecie gives a warm welcome, first offering to take your coat and upon returning anxiously awaits to discuss the things she likes most.

"I love fashion and shopping for clothes," she says, flashing her big brown eyes and showing off one of her many fashion sketches. "I think my love for fashion started when I was in about the fifth or sixth grade," she says. "I was making clothes for my Barbie dolls."

Keecie's eye for fashion isn't as great as her keen perception of math and the sciences, though. She may wear her make-up to a model's expertise and her clothes may look high-fashion, but Keecie will overrule any suggestion of her taking fashion designing seriously. Only a ninth-grader, she is already a geometry student at Carver High School.

"I hope to be very successful in computer science one day," says Keecie, who plans to study at Howard University. "I think I have a better chance of doing well in computers."

"Fashion designers aren't really in demand," she says, "but if you decide that's what you want to do, you have to be very, very good and I think I'd rather be in demand."

At Carver, Keecie, an all-academic honor student, serves as secretary of the student council and is a member of the school's Computer Club. After attending predominantly white schools, she says she didn't think she would be able to adjust at Carver.

"It's really different at Carver," she says, "and it's so big that you have to stand in line just to get down the steps."

"I love Carver," says Keecie, "and it was surprising because when I first got there I thought there would be a lot of racial problems, with the few white students that are there."

"It's not like that at Carver, though," she says. "People don't even separate themselves. It's like everybody's one color."

Keecie has served on the student council every since the fourth grade and last weekend she attended the North Carolina Association of Student Councils conference in Winston-Salem.

Please see page B4

New Yorker turned Tar Heel likes Winston

By AUDREY L. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

It may not be a sure-fire way of finding the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, but Carol Sanders took the risk when she threw up three strips of paper with names of North Carolina cities written on each.

The one she picked was Winston-Salem. The next thing the 34-year-old New York native did was take a day off from her job as an emergency room technician at Staten Island Hospital and caught a bus to Winston-Salem, hoping to find an apartment for her and her two children.

"When I got here," says Sanders, who moved here last September, "I picked up the phone and called an old girlfriend who I had become friends with when I visited my grandparents in Newton during the summers."

"She didn't even know who I was," she says, "so I said, 'Remember me? This is Hannah Mae's niece.'"

Afterwards, the two got together and found Sanders an apartment in one day.

Her other choices, Newton and Greensboro, she says, were her alternates. In Newton, Sanders says she would have had the serenity of the quiet, small town setting, and Greensboro would have been close enough to N.C. Baptist Hospital, where she works as a nurse's assistant. And even if Winston or the other cities hadn't worked out, she says nothing could have convinced her to stay in New York.

"I really got tired of living behind bars," she says. "The kids had to stay in the house a lot and I even watched a man break into my apart-

ment one night."

"I'm not knocking New York," says Sanders. "Every chance I get, I go back to visit, but living there got to be a hassle."

The summer visits to her grandparents house was what sold Sanders on the South, she says.

"I've always loved the South," she says. "The cows and the chickens fascinate me, but I never did learn how to cook on a woodstove and I lost a lot of weight when I tried to learn."

Sanders says her main purpose for even considering Winston-Salem was because of the qualified medical facilities that would allow her to advance at Baptist Hospital. She is now enrolled in an emergency medical technician

class at night.

and I even found some cousins here."

Despite that Sanders knew only one person, was jobless and without a car, she says she gave herself one year to decide if she would stay.

"I like it here and if I didn't like it, I'd tell you," she says. "I'm not afraid to leave my children alone anymore and it's remarkable how well they've adjusted."

"The only disadvantage of living here," Sanders says, "is that the transit system doesn't run often enough. I didn't even drive in New York."

She recalls one other complaint. "It was hard getting settled here," Sanders says, "and at first I went into a shell because of it. I was surprised, but people aren't as friendly in Winston-Salem as they are in Newton."

Being from the city, Sanders, her 13-year-old daughter Tonya and her 10-year-old son Desmond are often in store for surprises when it comes to Southern living.

"It flipped me out when I walked to school with my son one day," she says. "There's this long path and then you have to cross a bridge just to get to Latham (Elementary)."

"I mean in New York, you just go out the door and to the corner and you're at school," Sanders says with a look of amazement.

Now that Sanders has been "Tar Heeled," she no longer allows herself to be excluded from the conversations of her classmates and co-workers, most of whom are men.

"I'm into basketball now," she says, "I hated it when Duke beat Carolina and I know all the players, especially Michael Jordan."

Newcomer

class at night at Forsyth Technical Institute. Her ultimate goal, she says, is to become an electrocardiograph technician and she is looking to the Bowman Gray School of Medicine to give her the necessary training.

"I just like working in hospitals," Sanders says, "especially in emergency rooms."

Even though she says she doesn't regret how she chose Winston-Salem as her new home, her feet did get cold at first.

"The first thing that came to my head while I was on the train to Winston-Salem was, 'Oh my God, what am I doing?'" she says, but since I've been here I've met some beautiful people



'Tar Heeled'

Carol Sanders came to the Twin City with no home, job or car and only one friend, but she's settled in now (photo by James Parker).

Lamaze makes having a child easier, less painful, through preparation

By AUDREY L. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Childbirth can be traumatic and frightening, say medical experts, especially if the mother doesn't know what to expect.

For a minimal fee, a Lamaze class is offered every Thursday from 6:30-9 p.m. at Reynolds Health Center for mothers to be, the fathers or whoever opts to participate in the delivery process. The class lasts five weeks and is offered every other month.

Contrary to belief, Lamaze, named after its French discoverer, is not natural childbirth, but prepared childbirth that teaches the mother how to prepare for the changes her body will experience, how to utilize breathing and how to relax.

Webra Price, an obstetrics and gynecological nurse at

"Black women are at a high risk for hypertension, heart attack and sickle cell, especially during pregnancy."

-- Webra Price

Wesley Long Hospital in Greensboro and instructor of the class, would like to see more of the black community in Winston-Salem participate.

"Mine is an objective observation," she says, "and it bothers me that there aren't many black women taking advantage of Lamaze. But birth can be exciting and positive if you're prepared."

"A lot of young single women shy away from Lamaze classes because oftentimes it's played up as a husband and wife thing," she says.

Barbara Gray, a mother-to-be, took the advice of her doctor and enrolled in Price's class. Her sister, Sandra, along with two other sisters have been attending regular class sessions with their sister. The decision they have to make now is which one will accompany Barbara into the

delivery room to give her support and encourage her to use the breathing and relaxation techniques she's learned in class.

"Since I've been in this class," says Barbara, who is expecting her first child in a few months, "I was really scared at first. Now the waiting is not as bad. I've really gotten a lot out of this."

Sandra says she doesn't think she'll be the one to accompany Barbara, but she says the class has helped her learn enough to know what to expect when she decides to have a child.

Because of the health hazards many black women face during the childbearing years, Price strongly urges black mothers-to-be to be cognizant of the advantages of prepared birth methods, especially Lamaze.

"Black women are at a high risk for hypertension, heart attack and sickle cell," says Price, "especially during pregnancy."

"Lamaze helps break down the fear and tension cycle that could lead to stroke or heart attack," she says. "Childbirth is like a physical event that you're in training for and you have to prepare."

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry McMillian of Winston-Salem are preparing for their first child. Mrs. McMillian has decided to give birth at the Carolina Birth Center in High Point, a home-like setting for women who don't want the hospital atmosphere during the delivery of their baby. While they're waiting for the big day, Lamaze, they say, has been a big help in relieving some of their fears and anxieties.

"You really can learn so much from this class," says Mrs. McMillian. "When you're all excited and not of aware of what's going on during labor, your contractions can be very painful."

Her husband is positive and excited about the whole experience, especially the role he'll play in his child's birth.

"I feel good about taking part in this," he says. "I've



Won't Be Long Now

With the help of Lamaze classes, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry McMillian will be expecting their first born in a month (photo by James Parker).

learned how to be more concerned and how to distinguish the changes she's going through.

"Since I've been in this class," he says, "I've become

much more sympathetic to her needs."

During childbirth, father or whoever will participate in

Please see page B4