

Local Kid Makes Good, Will Dance at Upcoming Black Theatre Festival

By DAVID L. DILLARD
Chronicle Staff Writer

As a boy, Brian Pitts remembers growing up in a tough neighborhood in East Winston called Boston projects. Although he was a good kid, Pitts soon became a product of his environment.

"I was bad," he said. "I was causing all kinds of havoc."

Pitts said he was a smart kid, but being mischievous kept him somewhat unattentive in class.

"They couldn't get me to focus in class," he said. "I had all the potential but it went unloved."

Today the 23-year-old ballet dancer is rehearsing long hours each

night in preparation for the National Black Theatre Festival. He is performing in the opening production "Celebrations: An African Odyssey" on Aug. 2, at 9 p.m., at the Stevens Center.

Pitts described himself and other kids from low-income neighborhoods as diamonds in the rough, realizing now that he could have easily been steered down the wrong path.

Pitts said the public school system is unequipped to nurture young black males but credits his black guidance counselor at Easton Middle School for channeling his energy in a positive direction.

While attending high school at

the N.C. School of the Arts, Pitts experienced the joy of dancing and the pain of harassment from friends.

"I got ridiculed a lot from the guys, being articulate and a dancer," he said. "It was difficult, but they were very supportive. Like a fire and ice thing."

Pitts earned a full scholarship and an annual stipend to attend the Pacific Northwest Ballet School in Seattle, where he refined his craft by becoming more in-tune with himself.

"It's hard. Ballet is such a disciplined art form," he said. "Once you learn the basics and get in touch with yourself, then you can express yourself (through the movements)."

After a brush with the Nation of Islam, he met Larry Gossett, a founding member of the Black Panther Party and founder of the Central Area Motivational Program (CAMP), where he learned the benefits of blacks bonding together and taking young men through Rites of Passage.

"They dealt with me like they were my parents. Everybody contributed to my development," he said.

While attending ballet school, Pitts worked at CAMP for two years as an outreach counselor and then a case manager where he handled at-risk youth.

He returned to Winston-Salem

three months ago, he said, still disappointed to find apathy in the black community and political leaders with no backbone.

"Black people here are less involved. In Seattle they get a position and say what they want to; here they are more timid," he said, specifically referring to what he said was a lack of public support for Alderman Larry Womble from blacks here when Womble was attacked for writing a letter criticizing the city. "In Seattle they have a strong knowledge of African as well as African-American history and are more involved in education and community service."

Pitts, who now lives at 1415 E. Sedgefield Drive, revisited Boston

projects a few weeks ago and — all too familiar with the high potential for crime — he locked his door. To his surprise, Pitts was scolded by his mother for locking his door while at the projects but asked his mother why she locked her door when they arrived at an HQ store.

"She was saying don't be afraid of your own people," he said, while decoding the message his mother was sending. "When you get out there, that's when you lock your door. They are the ones out to get you."

Chi Eta Phi Sorority Members Attend 1993 Boule

Nine members of the Chi Chi Chapter of Chi Eta Phi nursing sorority attended the 1993 Boule in Los Angeles July 13-18. Over 500 delegates from across the country and the Virgin Islands attended the boule.

Sylvia Flack, nursing director at

Winston-Salem State University, was recognized as an honorary member of the sorority.

Mildred Smith was recognized as a lifetime member. Velma Fields was appointed the assistant to the national editor-in-chief.

Annie Alexander and family

members appeared on the "Arsenio Hall Show."

Doris Johnson, Mickey McCullough, Carolyn Rice and Fields were approached to appear on the "New Price is Right Show" but refused because of a previous engagement.

Members of the Chi Chi Chap-

ter who attended were: Elleton McCullough, Velma Fields, Doris Johnson, Carolyn Rice, Gloria Miller, Annie Alexander, Mildred Smith, Vicky Johnson, JoAnn Miller and Sylvia Flack.

The sorority is composed of registered professional nurses.

Black Theatre Festival to Begin Next Week

The North Carolina Black Repertory Company (NCBRC) will hold its third biennial "National Black Theatre Festival" (NBTF) in Winston-Salem Aug. 2-7. The 1993 NBTF, which follows the 1991 and 1989 NBTFs, will bring together over 250 black theatres in America and allow 20 of the best theatre companies to perform a total of 51 performances. In addition, over 15 workshops will be available for not only artists, but the general public as well — free of charge.

This year's NBTF has added another aspect to its outreach program. Working in sponsorship with the Winston-Salem Urban League, the Winston-Salem Housing Authority and Emmanuel Baptist Church, the NBTF is extending a special opportunity to the youth of the community, ages 5 to 18, to interact with celebrities in large and small group settings. Provisions are being made for about 500 young people to attend daily sessions with the stars and one of the plays for


only \$10 per person.

The NBTF, the Winston-Salem Urban League, the Winston-Salem Housing Authority and Emmanuel Baptist Church invite you as an interested citizen, community agency, organization or corporation

to help support their efforts by sponsoring some of the underprivileged youths of the community. To register your youth, pledge your support and/or request additional information, contact Cynthia Mack or Cleo Solomon at 725-5614.

Subscribe Now and Get Festival Tickets

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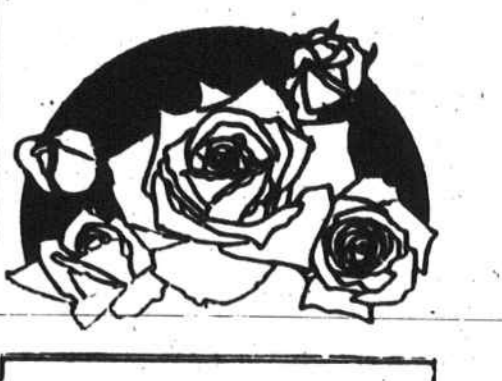

BY APPT. ONLY EXP. 8/31/93



Community EVENTS CALENDAR

July

How to Schedule Your Events: Send your information, concisely and neatly printed or typed, to the *Chronicle* Calendar, 817 N. Liberty St., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102, before 5:00 p.m., the Monday preceding the week in which your event will occur. Our FAX number is (919) 723-9173.

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THURSDAY, JULY 29

7:30 p.m. — The Winston-Salem Pond Giants will play the Camel City Camels at Ernie Shore Field. Admission is \$3; kids and senior citizens, \$1.50.

SATURDAY, JULY 31

9 a.m. — The Kernersville Raiders football program will hold registration for the pee wee, midget and bantam football teams until 2 p.m. at the Kernersville Jr. High School football field. Pee Wee boys/girls, ages 9-12, must weigh 70-110 pounds. Midget boys/girls, ages 10-13, must weigh 85-125 pounds. Bantam boys/girls, ages 12-15, must weigh 115-160 pounds. For information, call Coach Ron Brown at 595-3672 or Coach "J" at 788-8953.

10 a.m. — The Winston-Salem Tiny Rams football team will hold registration for players and cheerleaders until 2 p.m. at Miller Park football field. For information call Lewis Green at 922-3922.

10 a.m. — The Tiny Viking football program will hold registration for players and cheerleaders at the Mineral Springs Middle School parking lot/field until 2 p.m. for boys and girls, ages 5-15. Bring a certified birth certificate and registration fee. For information on boys, call Anthony Moore at 922-1137 or Johnny Oglesby at 788-1817. For information on girls, call Renee Oglesby at 788-1817 or Mary Ellen Stupakewicz at 767-4064.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 1

2 p.m. — The Little Theatre of Winston-Salem will present the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "Oklahoma!" at the Arts Council Theatre at 610 Coliseum Drive. A special Sun-

day matinee discount is offered with \$2 off the price of each ticket. A half-price ticket to "Oklahoma!" may be obtained with the purchase of a 1993-94 season membership. The box office is open Tuesday through Saturday from 12 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. For ticket prices or to reserve tickets, call 725-4001.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 3

2 p.m. — The city of Winston-Salem's Neighborhood Government Services Office will hold the workshop, "Small Business Loans," presented by Janet DeCreny of the city's Economic Development Office. The building is located at 2301 N. Patterson Ave. The public is invited. For details call 727-2975.

3:30 p.m. — Ellie Collins of the Compassionate Friends of the Triad will present a program on dealing with the death of a family member at the city of Winston-Salem's Neighborhood Government Services offices, 2301 N. Patterson Ave. Call 727-2975 for details.

7 p.m. — Give neighborhood crime and drugs a going away party. "National Night Out" will be held at the Neighborhood Government Services Office, 2301 N. Patterson Ave. The New Bethel Baptist Church Young Adult Choir will be the special guest. Please bring lawn chairs.

7 p.m. — The Carver Road, Northampton Drive and Northwood Estates communities will hold a meeting at Carver High School. All parents, grandparents and guardians of students attending Carver and staff members and concerned citizens are asked to come meet Carver's new principal, Daniel Piggott.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4

11:30 a.m. — A free blood pressure screening will be available through Bowman Gray School of Medicine. Call 727-2975.

ONGOING

- The Citizens Coalition for a Better Tomorrow announces its Summer '93 Hire A Teen: Odd Jobs Referral Program for teenagers, 13-18. If you have odd jobs to be done, call Horace Fulton at 761-0346 or 761-0262.
- Senior Financial Care, a United Way agency, would like to make July a great month for you by helping with budgeting, checkbook balancing, paying bills or filing health insurance claims. For assistance call 725-1972.

UPCOMING

- "Spice Up Your Life" in an Old Salem workshop, in which participants learn the fascinating history of spices. This workshop will be held from 6-9 p.m., Aug. 19, in the Single Brothers Workshop. The fee is \$10. For information or to preregister (required), call 721-7300.
- The Department of Women's Affairs of the Institute for Islamic Involvement Inc. will host its 2nd annual camp for Muslim girls Aug. 21-22 at the YMCA Camp Hanes. The fee is \$50 per person; \$35 for three or more in one family. Pre-registration fee is \$10. Call 748-0756 or 767-8252 for information.
- The Winston-Salem State University Class of 1953 will hold its reunion Oct. 8-9 at the Marquee Hotel. Call Donald Astwood (Fatz) at 914-934-5502 or send a post card to Donald Astwood (Fatz), New York Life, 411 Theodore Fremd Avenue, Rye, N.Y. 10580.

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