

SPORTS WEEK

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Despite ruling, LIFT staff, students resilient



Ronald Mumford, right, and Cedric McMillian load belongings onto the back of a pickup truck for their trip to Allen University in Columbia, S.C.

Parmon says doors will remain open so that LIFT can add to growing list of success stories

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

It is the best of times and the worst of times for LIFT Academy.

The charter school graduated 49 students in May, its largest class ever, and many in the class are going on to college.

Sunday, 11 members of the school's burgeoning football program headed to Allen University in Columbia, S.C., to start down their collegiate paths. Others in the class of 2001 will attend N.C. A&T State University and Forsyth

Technical College in the fall.

Earline Parmon, the school's founder and executive director, says there will be many more success stories and graduating classes at LIFT. She believes this despite the fact that a Forsyth County District Court judge



Parmon

just struck down an injunction that has barred the state from revoking LIFT's charter for the last year and a half.

The state moved to take the school's charter in 1999, claiming that financial mismanagement was rampant at LIFT. Parmon took the state to court, charging that in the state's haste to revoke LIFT's charter, the school was denied due process.

"We thought we had a good case based on the due process issue," she said last week from the school's new home, a roomy three-story

See LIFT on A2

Atkins principal ready for challenges

BY MELDE RUTLEDGE
THE CHRONICLE

Sterling Garris believes that the goal of a principal is to make sure that high standards are being set, and to make sure that students can achieve them.

"That's the kind of impact I'm hoping to make," Garris said.

He began as the new principal of Atkins Middle School, on North Cameron Avenue, on June 1. Since then, his main agenda has been to increase parental involvement and provide a staff that is sensitive to the needs of the students.

Garris graduated from Winston-Salem State University in 1980 and majored in intermediate education. As a child, he lived just a block up the street from Atkins when it was a high school.

"I'm a local boy," he said. Before his new position, he was the assistant principal of Kernersville Middle School for three years and an assistant principal at Paisley Middle School for two years.

Before the first day of classes started yesterday, Garris had the opportunity to meet with some of his students and their parents at Atkins' open house last week.

"We had a wonderful turnout," he said. "Some people thought it was not going to be so."

In previous school years many parents have not been too receptive to the idea of being involved.

Garris gave much credit to the PTA for the turnout and believes that the PTA will play a major role in increasing parental involvement.

"I'm very fortunate to have a very positive PTA," he said. "We've put some exciting things in place. They, themselves, are working very hard in getting parents involved."

But Garris would still like to see more volunteers, such as safety monitors and counselors.

"When the parents of these students are not involved, we still can make a difference if I have volun-

See Atkins on A5

Child advocates want parents to ensure kids' health

With the start of the school year, children should have all shots, dental check-up

BY MELDE RUTLEDGE
THE CHRONICLE

Almost everyone remembers his or her first day of kindergarten, and most of us have fond memories of it.

But imagine your first day of school with an aggravating toothache that distracted you from learning, or having to stay home with a case of the whooping cough.

According to the Forsyth Early Childhood Partnership, many parents are not aware of their child's need for up-to-date immunizations before entering kindergarten. In addition, almost 20 percent of the children in Forsyth County have not had dental check-ups and come to school with a host of dental problems.

"A lot of the time, parents don't think about that," said Carole Watson, the immunization program manager at the Forsyth County Health Department. "They're thinking of other things."

Watson has been with the department for 13 years and said that children not receiving their immunizations before school has always been a problem.

When a child enters kindergarten, the student is required to have three booster shots: diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP); polio; and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). After enrolling, the child has 30 days to have all of these vaccines, or he or she will be put out of school.

"Some children actually get to school to register, and that's when the parent realizes that they still need to get these shots," she said.

Forsyth County once led the state with cases of rubella (German measles), and recently there have been several cases of pertussis (whooping cough) in the area.

Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial disease that affects the respiratory system and produces spasms of coughing that usually end in a high-pitched

See Immunizations on A9

The Curtain Falls



Photo by Kevin Walker

Before the National Black Theatre Festival ended Saturday, festival volunteers Tonya O'Neal, right, and Tia Ingram got a chance to browse the International Vendor's Pavilion in the Benton Convention Center. The pavilion featured dozens of vendors from all over the globe selling everything from sunglasses and jewelry, to furniture and artwork. The NBTF said goodbye to the city in a festive way. See page A10 for scenes from around the festival, including Saturday's Closing Night Ceremony.

Burke will face challenge in ward

John Davenport says he wants to be a fresh, young voice in the city

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Armed with a catchy campaign slogan — "A new leader for a new century" — and a drive to take the city to new heights, John Davenport registered to run for alderman of the Northeast Ward Monday.

The 33-year-old engineer is a city native who has grown concerned about several issues over the years, including the city's ability to retain 18-to-34-year-olds.

"A lot of the jobs people in our age group want are not here in the city," Davenport said.

He is proof of that. He recently left a 10-year stint at the N.C. Department of Transportation to seek employment in the private sector. He found a job, at Kublins Transportation Group, but he has to com-

mute to Greensboro.

Last year, Mayor Jack Cavanagh appointed Davenport to a committee that addresses the needs and concerns of the city's 18-to-34-year-old population.

"I really love this community, and I want to make a difference," he said.

Davenport is a registered Republican but he is running unaffiliated. He said he made the decision because he wants a true bipartisan union with other members of the board and the mayor.

"I am running as John Davenport. I have no party behind me," he said. "I don't believe that the issues here are partisan. Everyone is concerned about jobs; everyone is concerned about growth; everyone is concerned about tearing down racial barriers."

As an unaffiliated candidate, Davenport must collect about 400 signatures in

order for his name to appear on the ballot.

If Davenport becomes an alderman, he must unseat Vivian Burke, the longest-serving member of the board, with six terms.

"I have a lot of respect for the things she has done in the community," Davenport said. "I just believe that it's time to transition to a new time...I see things differently. I would approach things differently. I feel that would be an asset to the board."

If elected, Davenport said, he will work toward term limits for aldermen. He believes that new leaders can never be cultivated as long as established leaders hold the positions of importance.

"I don't think it's healthy to have anyone serve on the board too long," he said.

Davenport is married to Nia Ricks Davenport. They have three children.



Lakesha Dunbar chats with John Davenport at the Board of Elections office. She was one of many supporters who came to cheer on the alderman hopeful.

Photo by Kevin Walker



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