



W-S Prep looking toward Oak Hill game

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Concert will honor man who gave much

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Breakfast celebrates local students

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THE CHRONICLE

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No EASY TASK

Forum on young black males tackles problems, solutions

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

A forum last week was to focus on "The Plight of Young Black Males." But before a panel of educators and community leaders uttered one word, the topic of discussion was amended to the "The Plight, and Promise, of Young Black Males."

With that altered theme, an audience of more than 200 listened intently to statistics, scenarios and perspectives that were good, bad and downright ugly.

From the onset, it was made clear that many popularly-held



Panelists Donnie Holt, from left, Nathan Ross Freeman, Robert Stephens and George Mims.

notions about black men, such as the belief that there are more African-American men in prisons than college classrooms, are pure myth (U.S. Census figures in 2000 found that there were about 200,000 more black men in college than behind bars).

But facts about today's black males are even more disturbing than the fiction, said Harold Martin, the senior vice president for academic affairs for the University of North Carolina System and the former chancellor of Winston-Salem State



University (WSSU).

"I do believe that we are in an epidemic situation," said Martin, after citing statistics that show that black men are twice as likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts and nearly seven-times more likely to be entangled in the criminal justice system.

Martin and Nigel Alston, a GMAC Insurance executive and chairman of the WSSU Board of Trustees, co-chaired the program - one of more than a dozen events held during a four-day



gathering of the Southeast Region Boulé (Sigma Pi Phi), a more than 100-year-old organization that is arguably the nation's most esteemed African-American fraternal group. Archons - what Boulé members like Martin and Alston are called - came from Tennessee, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia and beyond to Winston-Salem for the regional powwow, which was hosted by Gamma Kappa, the city's Boulé chapter.

Amid the dinners, the dance, receptions, fraternity business



Photos by Kevin Walker

meetings and tours of the city, the panel discussion provided archons and their wives, known as archousai, with a stark dose of reality - but one that they swallowed willingly. Interest in the topic was so strong that the immense crowd on hand for the discussion never diminished, even when the discussion ran past its allotted one-hour and a half.

Archon George Mims, a panelist from Sarasota, Florida's Gamma Xi chapter, said it is

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Native tied to Obama firestorm

City-born Andy Sidden delivers prayer at controversial S.C. concert

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Andy Sidden, a Winston-Salem native and South Carolina pastor, delivered the opening prayer Sunday for the "Embrace the Change!" Gospel Concert Tour sponsored by the campaign of presidential hopeful Barack Obama.

Sidden, an openly gay pastor,

was asked by the campaign to take part after the concert was criticized for its musical lineup, mainly gospel stars

Donnie McClurkin, who many say has made anti-gay remarks over the years. McClurkin says that he was once a gay man, but was delivered from the lifestyle by God. He now preaches that men can "overcome" homosexuality through God.

McClurkin has angered many in the gay community with statements like the one he made in an interview with FamilyChristian.com, a seller of Christian books and videos.

"It's amazing how we turn a blind eye to the fact that our children are directly influenced by what they see and what society portrays as normal living. Homosexuality has really ravaged our children," McClurkin said.

The three day African-American gospel tour was designed to raise money and promote Obama among religious African-Americans in South Carolina.

After the controversy started, Obama issued a statement that said he "strongly disagree(s)"

with McClurkin's views and that he has been consistent in his support on gay, lesbian and transgender (GLTG) issues, Obama, in an interview with The Advocate, a well known gay magazine, said that he wished that McClurkin had been researched better by his campaign before he was signed to do the concert.

The Obama campaign invited Sidden to take part in hopes of smoothing over hurt feelings in the gay community because of McClurkin's involvement. But Sidden's addition started a whole new controversy, with many African-American gay advocates



Sidden

Annual awards presented to the disabled and their advocates

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

The joy in the room at Ardmore Baptist Church was tangible Tuesday afternoon as eight tots from the Children's Center in Winston-Salem regaled the audience with song. At three and four years of age, the boys and girls had no idea that they were entertaining a group that will someday be vastly important in their lives. All they knew was that the music was playing and the microphone was up for grabs.

"Music is more than performance - it's a therapeutic process for them," explained Executive Director Michael Britt, who oversees the more than 100 children with physical and other disabilities who attend the school.

The Children's Center "choir" served as the entertainment at the annual awards luncheon hosted by the Winston-Salem Mayor's Council for Persons with Disabilities (MCPD).

Since its inception in 1948, the MCPD has worked in conjunction with the city and other independent organizations to improve the quality of life for people with a variety of different disabilities.

"We're here to advocate for people with disabilities, both attitudinal barriers and physical barriers, that we're trying to break down, basically, showing people what daily life is like when you have a disability," explained longtime volunteer and past MCPD President Beth Bowman. "We want people to understand that all of us are the same - there are more similarities than dissimilarities."

Volunteers and members, as the officers are called, advocate for equal rights and access in many arenas, campaigning for everything



Youngsters from the Special Children's School perform at the ceremony.

See Awards on A12



Photos by Layla Farmer

Ten-year cancer survivor Barbara Wilson, seated, center, is flanked by other survivors.

SISTERS IN THE STRUGGLE

Breast cancer survivors celebrate life

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

Outside, the sky was gray and unforgiving, spitting raindrops in every direction, but there was no shortage of color or cheer inside the Village Inn Golf & Conference Center in Clemmons last Thursday afternoon, as local women gathered for the Susan G. Komen N.C. Triad Affiliate's Annual Breast Cancer Survivor Celebration Tea.

A sea of pink-clad ladies in every stage of survivorship convened at the conference center, united by the invisible thread of a common struggle.

"This is just our way of celebrating survivorship, raising awareness in the community and just celebrating them for all that they've been through and all that they represent for our community," said Betsey

McRae, executive director of the Triad Affiliate. "These women are a living testament to the importance of early diagnosis and the fact that breast cancer is survivable, if it's diagnosed early ... they really are the inspiration behind all of the work that we do."

About one in eight American women will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point in their lives, McRae says. The tea, which was emceed by Fox 8 Anchor Cindy Farmer, helps to raise awareness about the cause, and pay homage to the brave



McRae

women who have rallied against the dreaded disease.

"Basically, if you're a breast cancer survivor, you're invited," McRae remarked. "A lot of it's very social, it's just a time to get together with old friends and see faces. It's just a very nice party the ladies enjoy very much."

No one can deny the severity of the disease, yet the tea is intentionally upbeat, McRae says.

"Breast cancer is a horrible, ugly, destructive disease and it affects the entire family and the entire community," she commented. "But when you look around this room, these women are smiling and they're enjoying themselves and they're happy. It's just beautiful to me, and very inspirational, very humbling to see."

Mary Ann Ballance served as keynote speaker at this year's

See Tea on A13



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