

# COMMUNITY

Your stories, your voices

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DECEMBER 18, 2008



## Community Calendar

### Aging Services Committee meeting

The Forsyth County Aging Services Committee will meet on Friday, Dec. 19 at 9 a.m. at the Central Library on Fifth Street. This group includes older adults, health care providers and government representatives who meet to ensure that efficient and high quality services are available to meet the needs of older adults. The group meets on the third Friday of each month. Call 336-703-3883 for more information.

### Substance abuse help

If you or a family member is struggling with substance abuse, HELP is a phone call away. The Twin City Area Narcotics Anonymous Helpline can be reached at 800-365-1035 or online at [www.tcana.org](http://www.tcana.org). For meeting schedules and additional information for this 12-step Recovery Program, please call the number or visit the Web site.

### Inauguration trip

Triad Travelers Group will sponsor a trip to President Elect Barack Obama's Inauguration. Departure is Jan. 19 at 11 p.m. from Winston-Salem State University. The group will return on Jan. 20. Call 336-749-1192 or 336-391-6676 for more information.

### Mourning women's support group

"Broken Hearts, Better Days," a support group for women (18+) who mourn the murder of a loved one, meets the second and fourth Tuesday of every month from 7 - 8:30 p.m. at Green Street United Methodist Church, 639 South Green St. For more information, call Paula Hawkins at 749-4691 or go to [www.vigils-forhealing.org](http://www.vigils-forhealing.org).

### Pre-Inaugural Ball

The Phi Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority will have its "A Pre-Inaugural Ball" in honor of President-Elect Barack Obama and Future First Lady Michelle Obama at 8 p.m. on January 9, 2009 at the Benton Convention Center Main Hall. Donations for this Black-Tie event are \$45. All proceeds will benefit the Phi Omega Cotillion and Scholarship Programs. Tickets can be purchased at the Special Occasions Book/Gift store at 112 MLK Jr. Drive. For more information, call Katrina at 336-972-7992.

### Talent Hunt seeks applicants

The Psi Phi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi is seeking applications for its Annual Talent Hunt. Eligible applicants must be student vocalists or instrumentalists in grades 9th - 12th performing classical or semi-classical music. The Talent Hunt will be held on Feb. 8, 2009 at 3 p.m. at the Anderson Center's Dillard Auditorium on the campus of Winston-Salem State University. Applications must be submitted by Jan. 26, 2009.

For more information, contact Co-Chairman Sherwood T. Davis Sr., at [bishop1@aol.com](mailto:bishop1@aol.com) or 336-655-8109.



Santa (Ben Piggott) chats with children Monday at the Carver School Road Library.

Photos by Layla Farmer

## A SANTA WITH SOUL

### Local man adds twist to age-old tradition

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

"There ain't no such thing as a black Santa Claus."

That statement — uttered by a Carson, Calif. mall manager in the late 1980's to a black man who showed up for a gig as the mall's Santa Claus — caused local residents to boycott the mall, which lost a significant portion of its patrons that holiday season. It is said that the mall has had a black Santa ever since.

Yet overall, black Santas are still few and far between, with proprietors overwhelmingly opting for the more traditional, rosy-cheeked, cherry-nosed sort.

Librarian Michelle Pate wanted area youngsters to get a different picture of Santa Claus, so she enlisted the help of "Soulful Santa," otherwise known as Ben Piggott, the longtime director of the

William C. Sims Recreation Center in the former Happy Hill Gardens community. Piggott spent more than an hour at the Carver School Road Branch Library Monday morning, posing for photographs with more than 130 children from nearby Quality Education Academy and a handful of day-care centers.

"I want (children of color) to know that Santa Claus looks like them, and at the mall, he's usually white," related Pate, the youth services librarian at the branch. "I knew the area (was predominantly African American and Hispanic); that's why I decided to get Soulful Santa."

Despite being decidedly different from the Santa Claus image many of the children were accustomed to seeing, the Soulful Santa was largely well received. The children wiggled and talked excitedly amongst themselves,

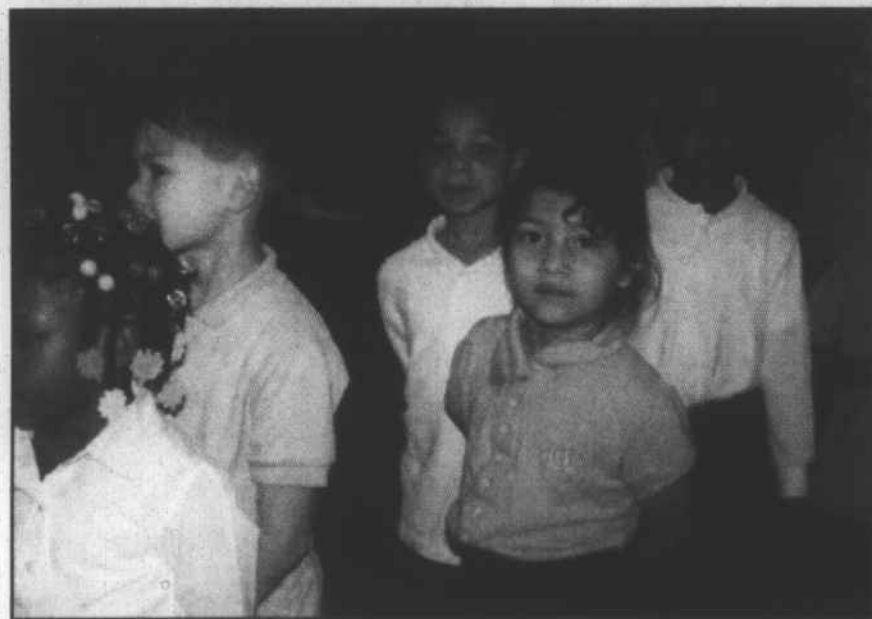


Brown



Michelle Pate captures kids' reactions with her camera.

See Santa on B11



Kids from a local charter school wait their turn to see Santa.



Curious kids ask Santa questions.



Every child was all smiles once they made their way onto Santa's knee.