

Scouting honors presented

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Piedmont I and Piedmont II Districts of the Boy Scouts of America, Old Hickory Council held their Piedmont District Banquet on Dec. 4.

During the event, district officers were installed for 2009. Several awards were also presented. Among the district officers for this year are District Director Michael Montgomery; District Executive Jean Dominique; District Chairman Fred Patterson; District Vice-Chairman Tony Potter; District Commissioner Keith Huffstetler; and Advancement Chairman Bill Rabil Jr.

The award winners were:

District Award of Merit
Amy Essex (Co-Commissioner of the Cub Scout Roundtable), James Brown, Catherine Stencil (Co-Commissioner of the Cub Scout Roundtable) and Steve Tucker

Shouse Award (given to a cub scout)
Noah Simmons

Cub Scouter of the Year

Myron Marion

District Cub Scouter of the Year

Jane Shouse

Boy Scouter of the Year

Paige Russell

District Boy Scouter of the Year

David Helms

Venture Scouter of the Year

Maurice Melton

District Venture Scouter of the Year

Robert Cunningham

District Commissioner of the Year

Pat O'Doherty



A cappella concert will benefit the Ronald McDonald House

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Five collegiate a cappella choirs will perform a benefit concert for the Ronald McDonald House of Winston-Salem.

The Saturday, Feb. 7 event will be held at 7 p.m. at Reynolds Auditorium, which is adjacent to R.J. Reynolds High School, 301 N. Hawthorne Road.

"A Cappella Jam for Hope" will feature choirs from Appalachian State University (Another Level), Wake Forest University (Minor Variation), UNC-Greensboro (Spartones), Furman University (The FUtones) and UNC-Wilmington (High Seas). Two cap-

pella groups from Reynolds High (Vox Demoni and Syncopate) will also perform.

Jeffrey Griffin, a radio personality and the voice of the Wake Forest Demon Deacons, will emcee the event.

According to organizers, the groups are part of a burgeoning a cappella movement that has developed over the past 20 years. A book about this movement, "Pitch Perfect," was released by Gotham Books last May.

Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased at the door. Proceeds will benefit the Ronald McDonald House, which is a "home away from home" for families of children who are receiving medical care at local hospitals.

Excitement building for Omega Mardi Gras

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The nation's tough economic times have not dampened the fundraising spirit of the men of Psi Phi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., who are planning another out-of-this-world New Orleans-style Mardi Gras experience on Saturday, Feb. 14, in the



Tammy Watson

Education Building of the Dixie Classic Fairground, from 9 p.m. - 2 a.m.

The event, which will feature music provided by 102 Jamz's own D.J. Polo, is designed to raise scholarship dollars to help send male high school graduates to college and young boys to summer camp. Last year, Psi Phi chapter awarded scholarships to five students. This past summer, nine boys and an Omega counselor were sponsored to attend summer camp at Camp Hanes.

"The dollars we raise are needed now more than ever especially in difficult economic times," said Charlie Bethea, chair of Psi Phi's Mardi Gras committee. "This program is another way for our fraternity to do what it can to help children and families in our community and have fun at the same time."



Contestants Courtney Jackson (left), Nicole McCollum and Cynthia Russell.

Mardi Gras will feature an explosion of color with a costume extravaganza, where prizes will be awarded for best male, best female, and best couple costumes. Outstanding costumes could earn a portion of a \$1,000 prize. There will be a first, second and third place winner in each category.

The highlight of the evening will be the crowning of the Mardi Gras

Queen, and the women who want the honor that night are currently seeking community support to claim the coveted crown and title of "Queen of the Mardi Gras."

Each of four queen contestants represents a committee named for the fraternity's four cardinal principles: Manhood (Nicole McCollum), Scholarship (Cynthia Russell), Perseverance (Tammy Watson) and

Uplift (Courtney Jackson). The queens and their committees are competing to determine which group can raise the most money. The group that does will have its contestant named queen.

For ticket and additional information, call Bethea at 336-896-8638 or email him at omegamardi-gras@bellsouth.net.

Applications sought for Youth Legislative Assembly

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Youth Advocacy and Involvement Office of the N.C. Department of Administration will accept applications through Feb. 12 for the 39th annual Youth Legislative Assembly (YLA), to be held March 13-15 in Raleigh.

YLA is an opportunity for North Carolina high school students to write, debate and vote on bills and share their views with legislators and other state government officials. General Sessions will be held at the Legislative Office Building, Room 643, with other activities at the Sheraton Raleigh Hotel.

Following procedures used by members of the N.C. General Assembly, participants will work in one of 10 committees before gathering for general sessions. Among the items to be considered are bills to: legalize the institution of civil unions; require every North Carolina public school system to offer a foreign language program in primary schools; require a minimum refundable deposit on recyclable, individually-sealed beverage containers; reform the gun show loophole; and institute a syringe exchange program. A YLA final report will be sent to the Governor, members of the General Assembly and other key state leaders.

Presiding over this year's YLA will be tri-speakers Seth Morris, a senior at Salisbury High School in Salisbury; David Freifeld, a senior at Enloe High School in Raleigh; and Elgin Giles, a junior at West Johnson High School in Benson.

The per-student fee of \$125 (four students in one room) or \$165 (two students in one room) covers hotel accommodations for two nights, five meals, a T-shirt and conference materials. Fees must be included with the application and will increase after Feb. 12. Written notice of acceptance or denial of registration will be provided by March 2.

To download registration forms, visit the Youth Advocacy and Involvement Office web site at <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/yai/ylaconf.htm>. For more information, contact YLA Coordinator Cynthia Giles at 919-789-5880 or Cynthia.Giles@doa.nc.gov.

Angelou will kickoff BHM events at Bennett

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Dr. Maya Angelou, who is hailed as one of the great voices of contemporary literature, will kick off Black History Month at Bennett College for Women on Monday, Feb. 2 at 11 a.m. in the Annie Merner Pfeiffer Chapel. The event is free and open to the public.



Angelou

As a poet, educator, historian, best-selling author, actress, playwright, civil-rights activist, producer and director, Dr. Angelou continues to travel the world, spreading her legendary wisdom. Angelou is the Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University. Her best-sellers include, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" and her latest book, "Letter to my Daughter."

Bennett President Julianne Malveaux says that she is overwhelmed at being able to open Black History Month with Dr. Angelou.

"Dr. Angelou, my friend, mentor and member of the Bennett College Board of Trustees, is a living inspiration. Her wisdom and words should inspire all of us to bring our 'highest and best' to every situation. Our students and the Greensboro Community will benefit from the time shared with her."



A large crowd listens to author Tyson speak.

Green Street

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unfold. Tyson later returned to Oxford to revisit the case through the eyes of those who had witnessed its destructive manifestation, even the accused. A movie based on "Blood Done Sign My Name," published in 2004, is slated for release later this year.

"I felt like if I could understand what happened in Oxford, then I could understand much more than that," Tyson said of his motivation to pen the book, which includes pieces of his own familial history. "I wanted to know what had happened. I was thirsty and hungry to understand it."

For the better part of an hour, Tyson fielded questions about the book critics have hailed as "a primer for understanding the currents and undercurrents of the Civil Rights Movement."

Audience members peppered him

with inquiries on everything from his thoughts during certain moments in his journey, to the reactions of his parents and other residents of Oxford to "Blood Done Sign My Name."

"People will not forgive you for speaking ill of their grandparents ... some people are just going to be mad, but a lot of them are not," Tyson said of the reaction in his hometown. "(The book) has broken a poisonous silence and conversation has been good. I've been very impressed and pleased, astounded and a little shocked (by the outpouring of support)."

Many members of the audience also thanked Tyson for being courageous enough to write the book.

"It was an awesome read," commented one man who said he remembered the racial tensions of the era well. "You really opened up a lot of Band-Aids with that book."

Despite providing the catalyst that has sparked candid racial discussions across the nation, Tyson said talking about race doesn't get any

easier. His advice to those who dare to brave the uncertainty of such a dialogue? "Lean into it. There's no way to have a comfortable conversation about race in a mixed race setting in 2009," he said. "Most of us long for something soothing and magically redemptive. I think it's best not to look for that."

Tyson's session was followed by a book signing and a concert featuring singer Mary Williams and members of her family. Tyson referred to the gifted singers as "the heavenly voices."

Williams belted out resounding renditions of spirituals in a manner that made her microphone seem like a mere accessory, pausing between ringing performances to offer her own commentary on the songs.

Green Street's own Sabbath Indigo, opened the concert.

For more information about the IDR, email willard.bass@gmail.com or call Green Street, at (336) 722-8379.

Photo by Layla Farmer