



Chris Paul to host annual festivities

-See Page B9



New nonprofit takes shape

-See Page B1



Men wear high heels to make a point

-See Page B1

North Carolina Room Forsyth County Public Library 660 West Fifth Street Winston-Salem, NC 27101

ADMINISTRATION FORSYTH COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY 660 W 5TH ST WINSTON SALEM NC 27101-2705

# THE CHRONICLE

Vol. XXXVI No. 4

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.

THURSDAY, September 24, 2009

## The Tree Still Stands Tall

Legendary social club celebrates 50th anniversary

BY TODD LUCK THE CHRONICLE

Party-goers danced the night away last Friday at a Black and White Ball marking the 50th anniversary of Les Arbres Club.

The shindig took place at Winston-Salem State University's Anderson Center. Les Arbres, French for "The Tree," is a private social club on New Walkertown Road that became a popular hang-out for the city's most upwardly mobile African Americans after it opened in 1959. Founders Manuel "Brick" Johnson and his wife, Mable, opened The Tree - which got its name because an actual live tree sprouts in the club - because segregation was the rule at the time.

African-Americans who wanted an upscale hangout had no options. "Blacks didn't have no place to go," said Brick Johnson. Les Arbres changed that in a major way. In its heyday, the club was used as a venue for some of the biggest names in jazz, and everyone who was anyone had a membership.

"People were looking for somewhere to go and have an evening of fun, a night out and just relax," said Mable Johnson. "It has a very home-like atmosphere."

The Black and White Ball has always been the club's premier event. It is such a large affair that it is held at venues throughout the

See Ball on A5



Brick and Mable Johnson



Photos by Todd Luck

Last weekend's ball featured music, dancing and food.



Photo by Layla Farmer

Isabella Williams stands on the WFU campus.

## YOUNG, GIFTED AND HOMELESS

Wake graduate student says she's proof that it could happen to any one of us

BY LAYLA FARMER THE CHRONICLE

Isabella Williams is many things. A mother. A master's level student at Wake Forest University School of Divinity. And "creatively homeless," as she puts it.

Williams, 36, already has an undergraduate and master's degree under her belt. She has worked as a teacher in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School system and at the charter school, Carter G. Woodson School of Challenge. She never imagined she would find herself in the precarious situation she and her two children are currently facing.

"I equated education with finances. As a kid, I always pushed myself," related Williams, a native of Hammond, La. "I thought that gaining an education would pull me up out of poverty."

Both of her previous teaching positions evaporated because of budget cuts, Williams said. For the past year, she has supported her family by substitute teaching and taking on freelance grant-writing and editing work. Times got harder late last year, when Williams says the home she and her family were living in burned to the ground.

"We were renting and I didn't have renters' insurance - we had just moved in," she said of the fire, which took most of the little the family still had. "We walked out with the shoes on our feet and whatever we had in my vehicle."

Support from the local faith community helped Williams barely stay afloat for a while, but earlier this month, she and her children found themselves truly homeless.

See Homeless on A10



Kurtz

## Southeast candidates prepare for runoff

BY LAYLA FARMER THE CHRONICLE

Southeast Ward Democrats Evelyn Terry, the incumbent, and James Taylor will face off again in a Oct. 6 runoff.

They were the top two finishers in the Sept. 15 primary, but neither received 40 percent of the vote - a requirement for North Carolina elections. Voter turnout in the ward and throughout the city was dismal. Only 446 people cast ballots in the Southeast Ward, which includes much of the Reynolds Park Road/Waughtown Street area. Terry managed to snag the most votes, 160; Taylor finished 10 votes behind her, and Democrat Jimmy

Boyd received 136 votes. Boyd said Monday that he has not yet endorsed either Terry or Taylor. Taylor said he didn't expect the race to be so close. "To be honest, I really thought that I would pull it off," he commented.

See Runoff on A3



Photo courtesy of the Terry Campaign

Evelyn Terry hits the streets to campaign.

## MC HATCH



WFU Photo

Wake Forest President Nathan O. Hatch, far left, helped the campus kickoff its United Way campaign last week by performing a United Way rap with the backing of the a cappella student group, Plead the Fifth. Provost Jill Tiefenthaler, standing next to Hatch, also got her rap on.

## WORKOUT PARTNER

Adams has been a fixture at local Y branch for a quarter century

BY T. KEVIN WALKER THE CHRONICLE

Over the decades, change has been one of the few constants at the city's historically African-American YMCA.

It's moved from one side of town to the other; employees and members have come and gone; and an array of high-tech, calorie-burning machines now share space with traditional steel dumbbells.

There to witness it all has been Alfred Adams Sr. - "Al," "Mr. Al" or "Big Al" to those who know, love and respect him.

Adams has been a fixture in the Winston Lake Family YMCA Wellness Center for so long that even he has trouble remembering when his tenure began.

"I've been here 24 ... 25 ... I'd just say 25-

See Adams on A2



Photo by Kevin Walker

Al Adams Sr. stands in the Winston Lake Family Y's Wellness Center.

DON'T PASS THE BUCK

# BUY LOCAL

