

Internationally-Known

Local imam among speakers at global religious gathering

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

Religious leaders from all over the world heard from one of Winston-Salem's own last month.

Imam Khalid Griggs, the longtime leader of Community Mosque and a well-known community activist, spoke at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Melbourne, Australia.

Griggs made four presentations on various topics before a crowd of roughly 8,000 attendees during the seven-day conference, held Dec. 3 - 9. Established in the late 1800s, the Parliament's purpose is to promote harmony and understanding amongst the diverse religions of the world.

"What was firmly reinforced was that we are all part of one family, and that's the human family," Griggs said of the convention. "If we are to survive as a species and if this planet is to survive the abuse that we have put on it, we need each other ... There has to be an interdependence that goes beyond faith traditions."

The 2009 gathering marked the second time Griggs has been a presenter.

"It's a wonderful feeling," he said of his participation. "It's a very satisfying and very humbling experience to be in the presence of the Dalai Lama (a Buddhist leader) ... and some of the most thoughtful religious leaders on Earth. It's very humbling just to be among these folks."

Griggs, a Winston-Salem native who was raised in the Christian faith but embraced Islam as a college student, has traveled to 26 countries in his lifetime, often to preach the virtues of his faith.

"I've been very fortunate; it's like it's been part of my destiny to travel," he related. "Growing up, my father was very wonderful about exposing myself and my mother and my sister to so many states ... and even Canada. That travel germ has just grown inside of me."

Griggs says traveling abroad is always a learning experience for him.

"International travel in part broadens your perspective on your own life, and the limits of your own knowledge," he remarked. "I think that we all are to a large degree the products of the sum total of our experiences. Because I've been exposed to such a wide array of people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, it has helped me to be much more tolerant."

Safiya Griggs, who has been married to



Khalid and Safiya Griggs at the airport in Indonesia.

the Imam for nearly three decades, accompanied her husband on his most recent excursion. Together, the couple traveled to Singapore to visit friends and to Malaysia. The two have made Hajj pilgrimages to Mecca twice, but neither had ever visited South Pacific the nations like Australia and Malaysia before.

The couple said they were most enamored with Singapore, where they spent a week with a couple that once lived in Winston-Salem.

"If there was any place in the world that I had a chance to live, I would choose Singapore," Mrs. Griggs related. "It's just an excellent place - very beautiful."

Imam Griggs added: "Singapore is a very interesting country. It is so orderly that, for the most part, people do not even jaywalk."

The Parliament on World Religions also made an impression on Safiya Griggs, the City of Winston-Salem's Adult Recreation Program supervisor.

"I learned a great deal; I have things that I plan to do here as a result of what I learned there," she commented. "I'm trying to get more involved with projects and just serving people ... I think when we do that, it brings us closer to the Creator."

News Clips

Compiled from staff, wire and submitted reports

Business 40 will close for two years for improvements

The N.C. Department of Transportation has selected the two-year closure option for the Business 40 improvement project in downtown Winston-Salem.

"The voice of the people helped us make this important decision," Transportation Division 9 Engineer Pat Ivey said. "We surveyed thousands of residents, business owners and commuters, and 70 percent of them told us they supported the two-year option."

NCDOT says it conducted an unprecedented public outreach campaign in 2008 to inform citizens that it planned to make major improvements to Business 40 from east of Church Street to west of Fourth Street. The department also asked citizens to choose which construction timetable they preferred for the one-mile section of road. The first option was completely closing Business 40 for up to two years. The second option was partially closing the road for up to six years, with only one lane of traffic open in each direction and some entrance and exit ramps accessible. Extensive surveying showed the public overwhelmingly favored the two-year option.

The Business 40 improvement project involves removing the existing pavement and replacing it with new concrete pavement. The project will modernize the entrance and exit ramps, and replace most of the bridges on and over Business 40 with new bridges that meet current traffic demands and modern design specifications. NCDOT says the project will create a safer, longer lasting roadway that will help drivers get where

they need to go more efficiently.

NCDOT has not yet selected a start date for construction as the project is still in the design and planning stages.

To read more about the project and the department's public involvement efforts, visit www.business40nc.com.

Scott finishes military training

Air Force Airman Andrew S. Scott graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.



Scott

The airman completed an intensive, eight-week program that included training in military discipline and studies, Air Force core values, physical fitness, and basic warfare principles and skills.

Airmen who complete basic training earn four credits toward an associate in applied science degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

He is the son of Cindy and Andy Scott and a 2009 graduate of West Forsyth High School in Clemmons.

AAU tryouts

The Winston Lake Lakers 9U AAU Boys Basketball team will hold tryouts on Sunday, Feb. 7 from 2 - 3 p.m.; tryouts for the 12U AAU Boys Basketball team will be from 3:30 - 5 p.m. at the Winston Lake Family YMCA, 901 Waterworks Road. For more information, contact Ed Plowden via e-mail at plowdened@yahoo.com or 336-416-0077.

'Race or Ride BBQ'

The Childress Institute for Pediatric Trauma at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center will be a beneficiary of donations made

during the "Race or Ride BBQ," presented by the Professional Bull Riders Inc. (PBR) and Richard Childress Racing (RCR).

The event, which is free and open to the public, will be held on Thursday, Feb. 4, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the RCR Museum in Welcome. It serves as a prelude to the 2010 PBR Winston-Salem Invitational and the 2010 NASCAR season.

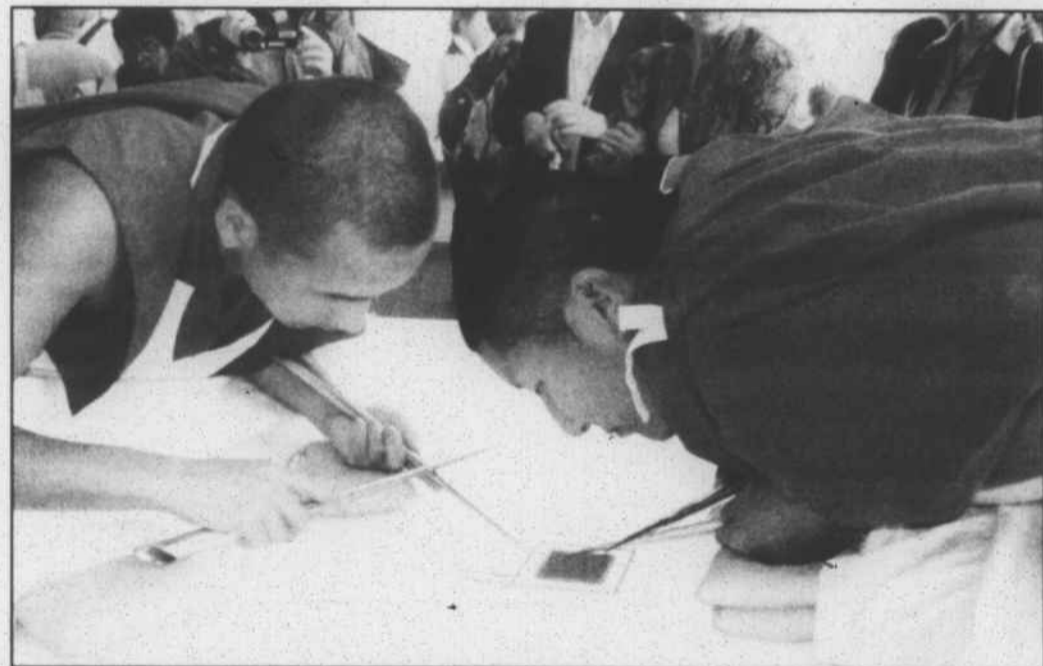
Highlights will include autograph signings by PBR World Finals Champion J.B. Mauney; NASCAR legend Junior Johnson and his son, race driver, Robert Johnson; Lexington barbecue provided by the RCR Museum; a wine tasting hosted by Childress Vineyards; and country music and giveaways provided by 104.1-FM WTQR.

Although the event is free and open to the public, in recognition of RCR's famous No. 3 car, fans can donate \$33 and receive VIP access to the event for 33 special guests. Donations will benefit the Childress Institute and the Garth Brooks Teammates for Kids charity. VIP access is limited and must be reserved in advance by contacting Kara Thompson at kthompson@RCRracing.com or (336) 731-3334, Ext. 3260.

Pancake Jamboree

The Twin City Kiwanis Club will host its 53rd annual Pancake Jamboree fundraiser on Friday, Feb. 12 from 6:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. at the Benton Convention Center. This charity event has become one of the most treasured fundraising efforts in Winston-Salem, with its proceeds going to support over 20 worthwhile youth programs across our community. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$3 for children under 12.

The meal also includes Pepsi soft drinks, coffee, milk and orange drink. Take out service will be available. The morning shift - 6 - 10 a.m. - will be broadcast live on WSJS, and at noon there will be a Celebrity Pancake Eating Contest.



Buddist monks give a demonstration at the conference.

SSAAH banquet slated for Feb. 12

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The Society for the Study of Afro-American History in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County will have its annual banquet on Friday, Feb. 12 at 6 p.m. at the Anderson Center on the campus of Winston-Salem State University.

The keynote speaker is Dr. Anthony Parent, a professor of history at Wake Forest University and author of "Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660-1740."

The Society uses a variety of methods of to preserve the area's rich and vast black history, including maintaining an extensive archives of photographs, records and other documents. Proceeds from the banquet helps the Society to continue its mission of passing on the Winston-Salem-Forsyth County's proud African American history and culture to future generations.

Tickets are \$40 and available through any mail at jpax-SSAAH@triad.rr.com, contacting Priscilla Jackson



Dr. Parent

ERIC J. SADLER, DDS

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The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc., 617 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636
Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636

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