



Submitted Photo

Volunteers work in the community garden at Main Street United Methodist Church.

## Program aims to grow more community gardens

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

The Forsyth County Cooperative Extension is hoping to help make this town a little greener this year.

The agency has high hopes for its community garden resource program, which was launched late last year with a one-year grant for \$40,000 from the Winston-Salem Foundation. The program will promote the benefits of community gardening and encourage local residents to grow gardens of their own.

As the custodians of more than 40 community gardens, many Forsyth County residents are already well versed in the benefits of community gardens, said Extension Agent Mary Jac Brennan, a former teacher and landscape designer who has been hired to spearhead the program. The Extension hopes to help foster the creation of at least 15 new gardens this year.

"This grant came about to try to provide some coordination for a lot of the interest that was already going on," she explained. "We want to start as many (gardens) as we can."

The Extension has a goal of founding gardens in at least 10 low income communities, but the key factor in deciding where to place gardens will be the level of interest shown by the residents of a community, said Brennan, a native of Sumter, S.C.

"We can't just take a garden and place it somewhere. We want this to grow from the grassroots up," she said. "There needs to be people in the community that will invest their time and energy and ownership in the garden for it to be successful."

In February, Brennan, who fancies herself a "community horticulture activist," will begin training local residents to go out into the community and help organize new gardens. She also plans to set up a system where the gardens can donate their excess produce to local food pantries. Brennan believes the gardens' greatest yield will be the social interactions they create among neighbors.

"You can accomplish so many things with a community garden," she said. "Not only can you bring people together to really enrich their lives personally and sort of create a lively spot within a community, but you can also improve the environment and you are providing an opportunity for people to be educated about the natural world."

Dr. Francis Manns Jr. is giving the community garden project high marks. Since 2007, Manns, a teaching assistant at C. Douglas Carter High School (formerly Carter Vocational), has organized a community garden known as Ancestor Acres at the site of the former Brown Elementary School, across from Shiloh Baptist Church on 12th Street. Manns, who also leads Carter High's 4-H



Photos by Layla Farmer

Dr. Francis Manns Jr. and former Carter student Kylin John pose with photos of the first prize award the school's 4-H club won at the Dixie Classic Fair last year.



Mary Jac Brennan is excited about the project.

club, is a strong believer in the importance of gardens. "It's all about nurture. We're nurtured by the Earth, and we owe that back to it," he declared. "Everything affects gardening and gardening affects everything else ... I don't care how high tech we go, we've still got to eat."

Brennan has worked in the community garden at her church, Main Street United Methodist Church in Kernersville, for the last two years. The garden has had a unifying effect, attracting workers from an array of socioeconomic and racial backgrounds, she said.

"Food seems to be something that we can all relate to," she remarked. "It's a really good medium for connecting people."

Although First Lady Michelle Obama has increased interest in community gardens of late, with her White House vegetable garden, Forsyth County has a long history with the concept. In 1759, the first documented community garden in the nation was established in the Bethabara community (now Historic Bethabara Park), Brennan said.

"Since we've got that kind of heritage, we just need to be the leaders in the country on this," she said.

For more information about the community garden resource program or to find out how to start your own community garden, contact Brennan at 703-2869 or brennamj@forsyth.cc.

## News Clips

Compiled from staff reports and submitted reports

### Baby becomes first born in Winston in 2011

Yahli and Kossivi Bessou of Winston-Salem are the new parents of a healthy baby girl born in 2011 at the Sara Lee Center for Women's Health at Forsyth Medical Center. At 8 pounds 7 ounces, the Bessou's daughter, Jasmine, was delivered at the medical center at 1:22 a.m. on Jan. 1. Both mother and daughter were in excellent health.

It is projected that more than 7,000 babies will be delivered during 2011 at Forsyth Medical Center's Sara Lee Center for Women's Health, an average of about one baby every hour and fifteen minutes.

### Crisis Control plans to use grant to change the lives of women

Crisis Control Ministry was the recent recipient of a \$30,000 grant from The Women's Fund of Winston-Salem.

The grant will be used to support the Breaking the Cycle Program, which provides case management for Crisis Control clients who need training and skill management in areas such as budgeting, job training, and interview skills. Through one-on-one interaction with a case manager, more than 100 clients have been able to maintain their financial situations without having to turn to social service agencies for additional assistance.

Chelsea Franzese, case manager for the program, has seen firsthand how the current economic crisis continues to impact women, especially single mothers. She remarked, "We are honored that the Breaking the

Cycle program was selected by the Women's Fund as a grant recipient. These funds will help many women rebound from seemingly hopeless situations and to become self-sufficient."

The Women's Fund of Winston-Salem seeks to improve the lives of women and girls by building a community of female philanthropists who provide grants to local programs and initiatives that address the root causes of social issues impacting women and girls in Forsyth County.

### Oguinn completes basic training

Air Force Reserve Airman 1st Class Julie N. Oguinn graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

She 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.

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

She is the daughter of Shelia Cook of Happy Lane and granddaughter of Kay Rudisill of Winston-Salem. Oguinn graduated in 2001 from Forsyth Technical Community College.

### Thigpen reappointed to N.C. Court of Appeals

Gov. Bev Perdue has reappointed Judge Cressie Thigpen to the North Carolina Court of Appeals. He fills the position vacated by Barbara Jackson upon her election last November to the state Supreme Court.

"I am pleased to reap-

point Judge Thigpen to the Court of Appeals," Perdue said. "He's earned the respect of his colleagues at the court and his distinguished career both as a judge and an attorney will continue to be of great benefit to this state."

Judge Thigpen was appointed to the Court of Appeals this past August, but lost a close election in November for a full term on the court. Prior to that, he was as a special superior court judge after more than three decades as a litigator in state and federal courts. He was a partner in the law firm now known as Blue, Stephens & Fellers. In addition to his 1999 election as president of the state bar - the first African-American to hold that post, Thigpen was inducted into the N.C. Bar Association General Practice Hall of Fame in 2007.

He has served as chairman of the board of trustees of N.C. Central University, his alma mater, and has also served on the board of trustees for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Judge Thigpen received his bachelor's degree from NCCU in 1968 and his law degree from Rutgers University in 1973.

### International conference features Triad professor

Dr. Jerono Rotich, an assistant professor in the Human Performance and Leisure Studies Department at North Carolina A&T State University, presented a paper entitled "Sports as a Metaphor to Unite and Empower Kenyan Youth to Champion Peace and Development in the 21st Century" at the Kenyan Scholars and Students International Conference in Bowling Green, Ohio.

He was elected to serve as a Southern-Regional Representative of the Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (2010-2012).



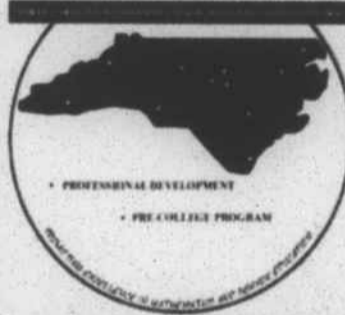
Oguinn

## NORTH CAROLINA'S

Premier University Based

## Pre-College Program

NC-MSEN



WINSTON SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY



The Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (CMSTE) NC Mathematics and Science Education Network (NC-MSEN) Pre-College Program

For Middle and High School Students (grades 6-12) who are interested in pursuing careers in science, mathematics, technology, engineering, and teaching.

Promoting Excellence in Mathematics and Science Education

- Academic Instruction & Activities in Mathematics & Science
- Saturday Academy, Tutoring
- Field Trips, Math & Science Competitions
- Recognition & Awards Banquet

Program Cost: \$50 for the remainder of Academic School Year  
Program Dates: January 8, 2011 - May 7, 2011  
Deadline for enrollment: January 27, 2011

For further information about the program and online enrollment please refer to the website: [www.wssu.edu/ncmsen](http://www.wssu.edu/ncmsen) or call or office at 336-750-2995.

**THE ELLISON LAW FIRM**

**Eric S. Ellison**  
Attorney At Law

Is Your License Revoked or even Permanently Revoked?  
I May Be Able to Get You a Driving Privilege.

Is the Bail Bondsman Too Expensive? Maybe You Need to try a Property Bond.  
Call Me!

112 North Marshall Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101  
(Just North of 1st Street)  
Phone: (336) 723-7370  
Fax: (336) 723-7372  
ellisonlaw@earthlink.net

"Dedicated To Providing You The Best Service."

NC-MSEN at WSSU