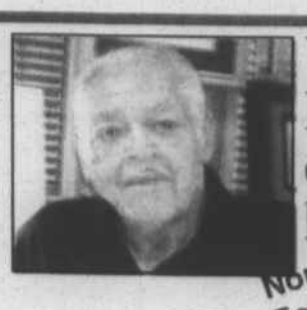
75 cents



WSSU Legends event to kickoff

-See Page B6

Author Roby is coming to Winston

-See Page A8

Annual honors given to educators

-See Page B1

Celebrating 36 Years of Community Journalism

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

THE CHRONICLE

14 120711 1 *********5-DIGIT 27101
N C ROOM
FORSYTH CTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
660 W 5TH ST
WINSTON SALEM NC 27101-2755

Vol. XXXVII No. 21 — WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — THURSDAY, January 20, 2011

FOR THE LOVE OF MOLLY

Local man determined to find help for aging guide dog

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

Twelve years ago, on a sunny Saturday morning in December, Winston-Salem resident Michael Nelson awoke to total darkness.

Nelson, 50, a former preschool teacher, says he had been having difficulty with his vision for about two weeks before that morning, and had visited the hospital the day before to have his eyes checked, but the sudden blindness came as a shock to both Nelson and the doctors who were treating him.

Newman

Nelson was later diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease known as polyarteritis nodosa (PAN). After spending months in different hospitals and enduring countless surgeries, tests and treatments, Nelson was told that nothing more could be done to restore his vision. Despite the disheartening truth of his prognosis, Nelson said he maintained an optimistic outlook.

"I am a Christian. I was standing on faith. I never really experienced panic or fear throughout this whole experience," said the Winston-Salem Bible College alumnus. "I believed that whether I gained my eyesight back or not, God would provide for me."

For Nelson, that provision came in the form of an exuberant yellow lab named Molly. She was the third guide dog that Nelson had received. The first two proved unfit for the job, but Nelson says he and the one-year old pup bonded instantly.

"Molly is extraordinary, just an incredible guide dog," he declared. "I never envisioned a dog could be so devoted to you, and to your welfare."

See **Nelson** on **A2**

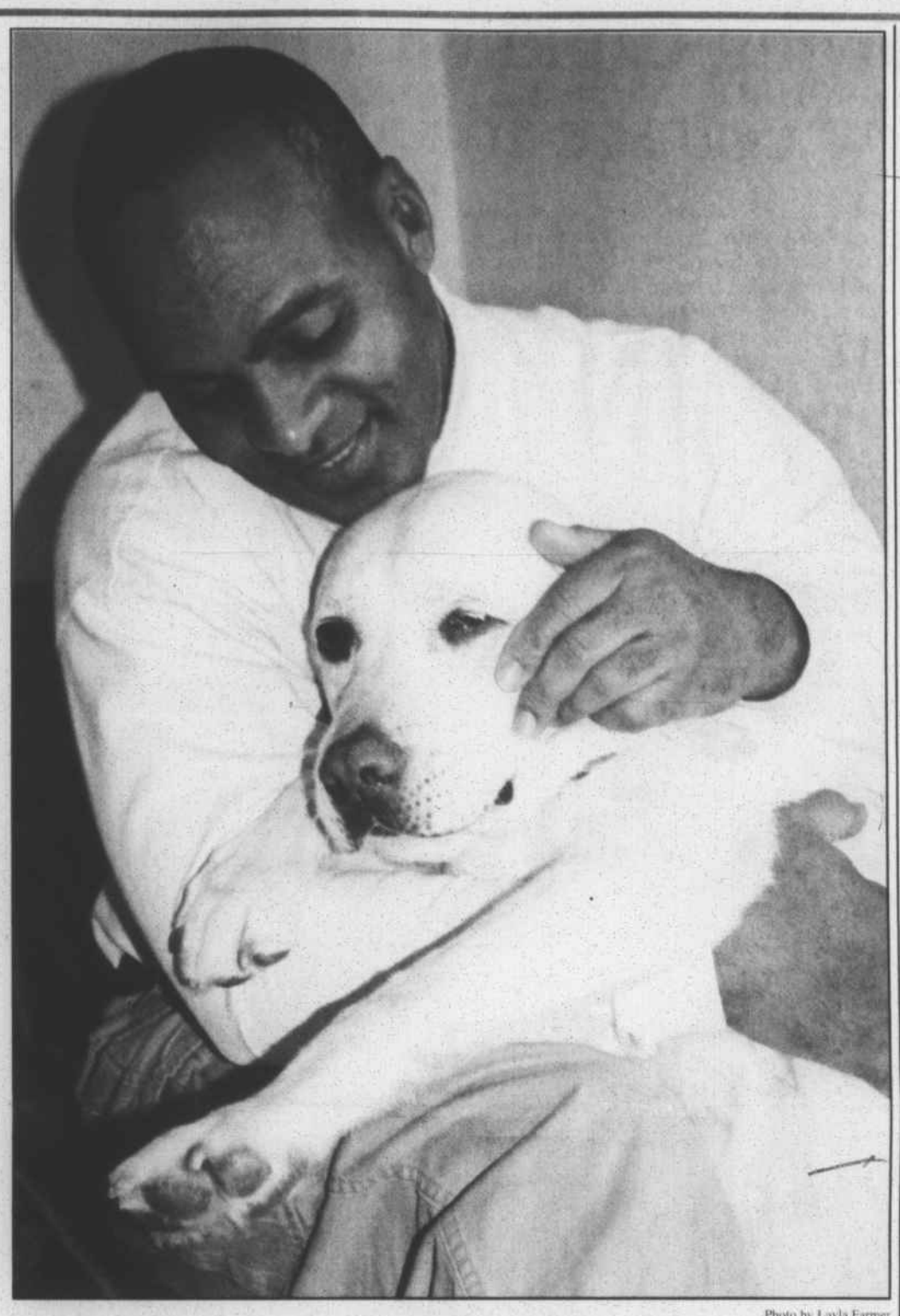


Photo by Layla Farmer

Michael Nelson has had his guide dog, Molly, for nine years.

Hope for Former Inmates?

Report calls on lawmakers and others to help ease the transition

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

Ex-offenders in North Carolina may have a better chance of finding gainful employment, if lawmakers heed the recommendations of the North Carolina Legislature's 16-member Joint Selection Committee on Ex-Offender Reintegration into society.

Shaw

After two years of exploring the issues surrounding recidivism and the reintegration of ex-offenders into society, the Committee outlined 17 recommendations to improve recidivism and reentry outcomes across the state in a Jan. 13 meeting in Raleigh.

Jeff Shaw of the NC Justice Center said the recommendations, which have not been released in their entirety to the public, center around two main themes: "reducing barriers to employment" such as criminal background checks early in the employment process, and moving toward "providing organized services with evidence-based standards," such as pre-release counseling for offenders.

Shaw, who has worked with ex-offenders in some capacity for much of his life, believes the recommendations are a step in the right direction. Finding gainful employment is a huge stumbling block for ex-offenders who are trying to turn their lives around, he said.

"Realistically (eliminating job candidates with criminal histories) places a lot of our friends and family mem-

See **Report** on **A10**

Photo by Layla Farmer

Tye Tribbett addresses the audience.

Tribbett: Resist Temptation

Gospel star alludes to affair that nearly destroyed his marriage

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

Grammy-nominated Gospel Artist Tye Tribbett spoke and performed before a packed house of more than 800 last Friday at Greater Cleveland Avenue Christian Church.

Battle

Tribbett's visit served as the kickoff for "Friday Night Fire," a new series for young adults at the church. The series, which will feature events several times a year, is designed to encourage the younger generation to embrace the teachings of the church, said Byron Battle, who has served as the college pastor at Greater Cleveland for the last six years.

"It's really about changing lives and putting young adults on the right path," he explained. "...We target Friday nights just to give our youth and young adults something (positive) to do."

The 33 year-old Tribbett is known for his dynamic energy and down to earth nature. With his former choir, Greater Anointing, Tribbett saw Billboard success with singles like "Victory," "No Way" and "Everything." Tribbett disbanded the choir last year, after his marriage was threatened by a highly-publicized affair that he had with one of its members.

His solo album, "Fresh," released late

See **Tribbett** on **A5**

Graham to help local teens graduate

Photo by Todd Luck

Stedman Graham gives a presentation last week to leaders of the local school system.

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Urban League thinks that alternative schools can increase their graduation rates by utilizing a leadership training program developed by Stedman Graham, a respected educational consultant.

The newly-developed Urban League Youth Leadership Institute will soon start a pilot program with 20 students at Griffith Academy, an alternative school for students with serious disciplinary problems. Students stay at Griffith from 45 days to a year before going back to a traditional school. The new program, which is funded by a state education grant, will continue to

See **Graham** on **A10**

THE DREAM LIVES

Artwork by Terence Oliver/ The Akron Beacon Journal

Check out the special Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. insert in this week's newspaper to read all about what the city had to offer on MLK Day.

DON'T PASS THE BUCK
BUY LOCAL
WS CHAMBER