



# Keeping idle hands busy defuses those hot summer tempers

When Pam Murrell, manager of the Kimberly Park housing complex, approached Urban Arts and asked for help in programming activities for youngsters in her development, no one knew the impact her request would have on city youth at all of the housing developments. After preliminary meetings with Ms. Murrell and a resident representative, dance and theater classes were decided upon.

It was then that we offered the same classes to Cleveland Homes, Happy Hill Gardens, and Piedmont Circle. All three eagerly accepted the meetings with development managers, and community representatives decided days, times and programs for each site. It was important to include the site managers and community representatives because so many times communities are told what they are going to get rather than being asked what it is that they want. It is hoped that this temporary summer program will be extended into the fall. There is a great possibility that these classes may meld into the currently existing Art-Is program.

Leading the theater classes, Joe Sutherin offers a stark contrast to the usual male role models. Though he appears soft-spoken and perhaps too "laid-back" at first glance, he demonstrates the needed patience to work with young people and knows just what to do to get their attention when

he needs to. According to Mr. Sutherin, "... the most important thing I can do in this program is to listen. Let them know that there is someone who is interested in what they have to say." This philosophy has successfully allowed him to tap some very creative resources. "Sometimes kids who are labeled 'trouble-makers' are highly intelligent and possess natural leadership skills," he continued. "It is necessary to reach into the depths of the participants and allow them to do the creative work. Let them see how good they can really be -- redirect all of that energy."

Recent breakthroughs have been seen at the sites as the participants are drawn into the creative phase of the summer program. At Kimberly Park, the theater class is preparing an original drama written by one of the ten-year-old students (with Joe's assistance). Happy Hill Gardens has found a favorite excerpt from "Fiddler on the Roof" in which one of the "star" performers has taken her previous abilities to be disruptive and is now using them to inject emotion into reading words from a page. Piedmont Circle is doing a modern parable on "Little Red Riding Hood." In the revision by the students, the Big Bad Wolf is a drug pusher. And, at Cleveland Homes, the youth are working on a reading of "Jack and

the Beanstalk." It is important to mention that

with school. Robin Franklin offers a familiar

## ARTS REACH

By REGGIE JOHNSON



needs at each site differ as night does from day. It is a challenge, but very positive things have happened at each site. The participants are urged to use their own creativity, and there are many beneficial "side effects." There may be a visible difference as each child begins to build self-esteem, pride in knowing that they have the ability to be very good at something they may not have been exposed to before. These classes develop creative problem-solving skills as the students use their own creative abilities to revise stories or write original dramatic pieces. As this program teaches the teamwork ethic, how to work positively with others, discipline, cooperation and learning how to follow instructions, there are some very tangible benefits as well. Academic skills such as reading and speech are improved though exercises not associated

face as well as a very strong, positive female role model for participants. Svelte and full of energy, Robin knows many of her students from past relationships through Upward Bound. And through her excellent choreographic skills she takes the boundless energy of youth and directs it to dance steps in modern, jazz and ethnic dance. Through the rigors of dance exercises, from a physical aspect, she takes explosive energy that usually has no focus and teaches some very real skills just as the theater classes do. Dance is a very real instrument in teaching discipline, in developing creativity, in learning how to follow instruction, and again learning how to work positively with others. Reaching back into our history gives these young dancers a sense of who we are as a people. It exposes them to a world which can expand for them beyond

the social dancing they see most often.

There is also a special component of the program which Urban Arts of The Arts Council is offering to the entire community at each location. The popular "Evenings in the Neighborhoods" touring musical program will be presenting an evening of fun, popular tunes and relaxation at each site or at a location close to the residents of these housing areas.

The need for this program goes beyond keeping the kids off the streets, although that goal in and of itself prevents many of the problems with youth we find ourselves addressing every day. Allowing the partici-

pants to discover a part of themselves they didn't know existed is a most valuable gift. Allowing our children to shine, even if only for two hours each week, is well worth the shine that comes from their eyes when their very souls have been lifted.

For further information about specific programs at each site, please contact the office manager at each housing development. For information about possible programs provided by Urban Arts, please call our offices at 722-5293.

Reggie Johnson is the executive director for Urban Arts of the Arts Council Inc.

## You must see history in the making

There are few occasions where we have the opportunity to witness an historical event. But, everyone within driving distance to Winston-Salem has such an opportunity. Each day in August, you can observe the most complex murals by renowned artist John Biggers being drawn and painted. Plans are underway to feature these two murals in a documentary, designed for television broadcast and a national publication.

Several years ago, I held the attitude, like many other people, that education was something you go to school to acquire. But, I realized that education is a lifelong quest, and the quest may involve learning about unfamiliar subjects from sources outside the classroom environment.

Recently, this concept was reinforced as I began to spend time observing and listening to Dr. Biggers. Though I have not had formal training in art, I have gained a depth of understanding of the process a serious artist follows in producing a small or large piece of work, just from watching Dr. Biggers paint and from conversations with him. I am seeing first hand the step-wise progression of

the "architecture" in building the two murals, as well as the tremendous amount of time, energy and patience an artist must give to a project.

From the inception of this project, plans were made to make this a

An avid reader of diverse literary works, an outstanding educator, a eminent artist who is strongly influenced by African art and culture, John Biggers is foremost a humanist, seemingly always willing to enlighten oth-

his attitude about life and living.

I invite you to gain new knowledge by watching the murals become a reality. The murals are being painted each day in August on the walls of the O'Kelly Library at Winston-Salem State University. Come see the artist at work during the library's normal hours. Though this project will last about 18 months, make plans now to observe the various stages/transformations the murals will go through. There is no charge.



## DELTA ARTS CENTER CORNER

By ANNETTE SCIPPIO

public art event. It is hoped that many people will come to the library and observe the progress of the murals. I can guarantee that each visit will provide a different view of the murals. Those who have watched the event to date have seen a plain white canvas transformed with basic charcoal line drawings, then painted outlines and on to images of women, birds, fish, turtles, suns, moons, beetles, railroad tracks, mothers, fathers, children, washpots, scrub boards and shotgun houses.

ers about the nature of his art creations. Each day I gain new information or uncover areas I need to research about history, art, literature, mathematics, geometry, sociology and astronomy.

Indeed, it is a tremendous opportunity for our community to have this Gastonia native create these works. We are doubly fortunate to be able to observe his techniques, his style and his creative genius - the artful depiction of information that has deeply influenced

## Natalie Cole gets green light on new series

Things couldn't be better for Natalie Cole these days. Married life is great. There's a great

confirmed are M.C. Hammer, Bell Biv DeVoe, Regina Belle, En Vogue, Patti LaBelle, and Smokey Robin-

son. The new series is set to debut the weekend of Sept. 15 on more than 100 stations across the country.

**Quick Changes:** James Reynolds will step into the lead role of daytime TV's newest drama, "Generations," as Taurean Blacques, who portrays Henry Marshall, the black family monarch, leaves the cast for personal reasons. Reynolds, who portrayed Det. Abe Carver on "Days Of Our Lives" for close to nine years, will make his first appearance on the August 29 broadcast... Meanwhile, TV actress Shari Belafonte (co-star of ABC's "Hotel" series) made her Los Angeles stage debut as the title character in "Tamar..." Meanwhile, veteran stage actor James Earl Jones has announced

that he is retiring from the stage. "Too demanding," said the 58-year old actor of his reasons why. Instead, Jones will focus his attentions upon a new TV series, "Gabriel's Fire", which is slated to debut on ABC this fall. In it, Jones plays an ex-con turned investigator. "I'm at the stage now where I have a hard time sustaining a serious drama beyond six months," the two-time Tony winner said. "My energies, I've had to face it, I just can't keep getting up there after six months, eight times a week."

**On The Home Front:** It's official. The honeymoon is over for C. Thomas Howell and actress Rae Dawn Chong, who recently filed for a legal separation. Howell has since filed for divorce from Chong, citing irreconcilable differences. This, after just one year of marriage. ... Are wedding blues in the near future for Jackee, who showed up on the arm of actor Dick Anthony Williams (who plays Denzel Washington's dad in the movie) at the LA premiere of "Mo' Better Blues"? According to reports, the two have been rumored to be engaged. ...

Next week: Graffiti Bridge co-star tells what it's like to play Prince's girlfriend, even if only in the movies.

## BEHIND THE SCENES



By LISA COLLINS

deal of success with her record career, particularly with the success of the "Pretty Woman Soundtrack" (on which she performs "Wild Women Do"), and hubby Andre is being praised for his work as producer of Leilah Hathaway's new album. (Hathaway is the daughter of R&B great, the late Donny Hathaway). And now, topping things off, is a new series. Cole calls the weekly, one-hour showcase for up-and-coming new talent, "a play on the old Ted Mack Amateur Hour." The three-time Grammy Winner will perform weekly while also serving as host. Already, Multimedia Entertainment has put together a heavy-hitting, all-star line-up for the shows that are to launch the new series. Among those stars already

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★ ASTRO-DESTINY ★		
★ ARIES Mar. 21 - Apr. 19	★	A degree of flexibility will be needed to cope with the changes coming up in your work. Stay loose!
★ TAURUS Apr. 19 - May 20	★	It's most important that your personality keeps on the same level with your success. A grumpy disposition spoils it all.
★ GEMINI May 21 - June 20	★	Your older relatives have their feelings hurt when a remark is interpreted incorrectly.
★ CANCER June 21 - July 21	★	A letter arrives from out of the past. Someone you haven't heard from in years communicates.
★ LEO July 22 - Aug. 22	★	Hard work never hurt anyone, but too much is not at all good for you. Take time to relax.
★ VIRGO Aug. 23 - Sept. 22	★	Money is freer than it has been in a long, long time and you should take some time to enjoy yourself.
★ LIBRA Sept. 23 - Oct. 22	★	You discover that you have been missing the fun in life and decide to do something about it.
★ SCORPIO Oct. 23 - Nov. 21	★	It's good policy to seek advice when a major decision is to be made. Experience helps.
★ SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22 - Dec. 21	★	Your charm and personality shine brightly and business accomplishments are possible.
★ CAPRICORN Dec. 22 - Jan. 19	★	People seem to be purposely blocking you out of the action. Your frustrated ego needs help.
★ AQUARIUS Jan. 20 - Feb. 18	★	Avoid appearing overly secretive to co-workers during this tense period. Misunderstandings will be too hard to remedy.
★ PISCES Feb. 19 - Mar. 20	★	Romance means a gentle person to Pisceans and just such a one walks into the picture this week.

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