

Community News B1

A unique African-American style

Winston-Salem groups to host National Stepshow competition

Chronicle Staff Report

The Xi Eta Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., of Wake Forest University, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Forsyth County will co-host the National Stepshow Association's 1991 Championships. The



Photo by Keith Belton

Keith Belton, president of the National Stepshow Association, is well-versed in the rich cultural history of the African-American stepshow.

second annual championships will bring several of the top-ranked fraternity and sorority chapter steptams to Winston-Salem. The event will be held Saturday, Mar. 23, at 7 p.m. in Reynolds Auditorium, on the campus of Reynolds High School, and will benefit a scholarship fund for students in the Piedmont.

"Xi Eta and Big Brothers/Big Sisters are really working hard to coordinate an exciting event," stated Xi Eta chapter president Kevin Hawkins. The chapter will invite Little Brothers and Little Sisters to the stepshow as part of the fraternity's "Go to High School, Go to College" program

aimed at black youth. "We are fortunate that the top-ranked chapters are in the Southeastern region," he said. "The kids should really enjoy the event."

The Eta chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., North Carolina A&T State University, is currently the number one ranked fraternity chapter and is the defending champion. Hampton University's chapter of Omega Psi Phi won that fraternity's national competition last summer in Detroit. The Alpha Phi Alpha chapter of the University of Virginia is the Alpha Eastern region champion. There is currently not a number one ranked sorority chapter, but the Virginia State University chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., has one of the strongest chapters on the East Coast. Several other chapters will be competing.

The National Stepshow Association is a student-run, nonprofit organization founded by black Greeks at the University of North Carolina and Duke University. It has since spread to campuses across the state. The organization seeks to end the exploitation of students, something that has developed with the rise of stepping's popularity. Initiated by black Greeks in the 1940s, this uniquely African-American collegiate dance form combines the precision of a military drill team, African call-and-response, and with modern dance choreography set to music. Since the early 1980s, there has been a great increase in the number of stepshows that are not student-directed. The larger stepshows held in Atlanta, Philadelphia, and New York raise in excess of \$35,000, yet a majority of the funds are pocketed by the for-profit promoter.

"We see stepshows as a means to creatively fund community service," explained Keith Belton, president of the National Stepshow Association (NSA). Belton, a recent UNC graduate, researched the histor-

ical context and economic circumstances of stepshows for his senior independent study in African-American history. The results of his research encouraged him and several other students to create the NSA last spring.

"Several for-profit stepshows generate in excess of \$50,000, and students receive less than \$5,000. We thought students need-

for Greeks to work together in the community to make a positive impact," he added. He cited the success of the UCLA Black Greek Council's annual spring stepshow which has generated \$135,000 for a minority campus scholarship fund over the last two years as an example.

Xi Eta chapter member, Michael Wat-

community should be done with those proceeds," asserted the sophomore from New York City. "This Winston-Salem event allows us to work with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and raise funds for a community scholarship fund. Other students like this idea," he said. "When I have informed Greeks at other schools about the NSA and

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Photo by Keith Belton

WFU's Xi Eta Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. will be stepping high at the Mar. 23 National Stepshow Association's 1991 Championship in Reynolds Auditorium.

ed to do something about that," Belton said. "In addition, undergraduate black Greeks have been maligned in recent years about unity and service. The NSA provides a way

son, has been to several of the larger non-student-directed stepshows. "The [New York] events are nice from a competitive standpoint, but activities benefiting the

its objectives, they immediately want to know more."

Pamela Cheek, Assistant Director of Please see page B16



Julia P. Chisholm

Chisholm is selected as 'Teacher of the Year'

Julia P. Chisholm has the distinct honor of having been selected "1991-1992 Teacher of the Year" at Konnoak Elementary School.

Mrs. Chisholm received her Bachelor of Science degree from Winston-Salem State University and a Master of Arts degree from A&T State University in Greensboro, N.C.

She was the "1985 Teacher of the Year" and the 1985 Terry Sanford Award nominee at Franklin Elementary School in Mt. Airy, N.C., and the "1989 Math Teacher of the Year" at Konnoak Elementary School.

Mrs. Chisholm lives in Old Town with her husband, James, and their two children. She is the daughter of James and Magnolia Perkins.

OUR FOLKS IN THE PERSIAN GULF

By PATRICIA SMITH-DEERING
Community News Editor

When Winston-Salem native and Medical Specialist Michelle Sloan Gilliam had little Shalece September 1990 in Fort Hood, Tex. where the family was stationed, both she and her husband, Sergeant Kenny Gilliam, were fairly certain they would be directly affected by the crisis that was shaping up in the Middle East. Both are in the 47th MED-SOM division. But the way things turned out was not quite what they had in mind.

According to Lois Sloan, Michelle's mother who lives in Winston-Salem, the family knew Sgt. Gilliam would have to go but not Michelle. After all, Michelle had just had a baby and was scheduled for classes in conjunction with her Medical Corps training, recalled Evelyn Sloan, Michelle's grandmother.

Lois Sloan had flown to Texas to be with her daughter when the baby was born. She was appointed legal guardian, a procedure that the Army encourages when both parents are in the service whether the country is at peace or war. Sgt. Gilliam was shipped out in October 1990 from Fort Hood, and Michelle went on with her own military and motherly duties. That is until February of this year when, in true Army fashion, she was also deployed to the Persian Gulf, leaving her six-month-old infant daughter behind.

"She had only six days to get ready which is what really upset the family," recalled Evelyn Sloan. So it fell to Michelle's mother, Lois Sloan, to go to Texas and bring her granddaughter back to the Twin City. "Michelle called me . . . They told her on the 3th of Feb. and I left on the 9th of Feb. to go to Fort Hood to pick up the baby . . . There wasn't a whole lot of time to do anything, but I had no choice," Lois Sloan said, thinking back to the hectic time. She took the next three weeks off from her position as unit secretary at Forsyth Memorial Hospital to get adjusted to the baby and the baby to her, she said, so that she could work out a schedule before returning to work.

Since that time, the grandmother and great-grandmother of the Gilliams' daughter share the responsibilities of taking care of Shalece. Evelyn has day duty while her daughter, Lois, works, after which Lois takes over for the evening. Evelyn Sloan said, "The family just had to pull together." Helping out this past weekend was another of the Sloan family members, Brenda — Lois's sister, who is visiting from Virginia. Lois Sloan reminisced about her daughter and the circumstances leading up to her career in the service and her marriage. Michelle, who graduated from Carver in 1986, entered the military in 1987 following her freshman year at Winston-Salem State Uni-

Although both are in Saudi Arabia with the 47th, Sgt. Gilliam is located about eight miles away from his wife, a situation that they are trying to have the Army change, said Lois. She heard from her daughter shortly after she arrived in the Gulf, and her son-in-law called Feb. 10. "He said everything was fine, but he couldn't say anything about where they were exactly because of Army restrictions," she said. The ceasefire does not mean anything to her



because all the troops are not home, and Saddam Hussein is still in control. "I still don't feel comfortable because they're still there . . . Saddam is still ruling . . . There's still a chance that he might try something," she said. That's why, just as she has done since the war started, she gets up in the morning with CNN [the Cable News Network] and goes to bed at night with CNN, she said.

As with other families who have people in the Persian Gulf, the Sloans are thankful for the great support they are receiving from the family, friends, and members at their church — Mt. Pleasant Baptist. "We had the baby dedicated Feb. 24," the new grandmother said. "Michelle wanted us to have her dedicated just in case they don't come back."

[Editor's Note: Although the war has been officially declared ended, we are acutely aware that the Persian Gulf remains an imminent concern until the last servicemen and women are back home with their loved ones. Their families continue to need the support and prayers of the community.

This column will be devoted weekly to their individual stories as each returns home. Please let us know your story. (919) 723-8428.]



Photo by L.B. Speas Jr.

Six-month-old Shalece Gilliam is surrounded by her extended family (l-r): Mark Sloan, uncle; Lois Sloan, maternal grandmother; and Evelyn Sloan, maternal great-grandmother. Shalece's parents (inset), Sgt. Kenny and Medical Specialist Michelle Gilliam, are stationed eight miles apart in the Persian Gulf.

versity. She went at the urging of her brother, Michael, who had already planned to join. As it turned out, Michelle left for training in June 1987, and Michael followed a month later. While Michelle was stationed at Fort Hood, she met and married Sgt. Gilliam, a native of Philadelphia, Pa., in 1988. She was due to be discharged this year in June.