

Amos serves as congressional page

▲ Reynolds student achieves coveted position in U.S. Capitol

By JOHN HINTON
Chronicle Senior Staff Writer

Pridgen "PJ" Amos of Winston-Salem has gone to Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Congressional Page Program selected Amos, a junior at R.J. Reynolds High School, to serve as a page in the U.S. House of Representatives.

U.S. Rep. Richard Burr, R-N.C., who nominated Amos for the position in April, made the announcement last week.

Amos will complete her job as a page on Saturday, June 29.

"I have had a good time," Amos said. "I am glad I got the opportunity. I like meeting different people from different places."

Among her duties, she works as a documentarian in the House, where she can be seen on C-SPAN sitting near the podium where members of Congress speak.

Only 64 high school students serve as pages during the summer session. They must be nominated by their member of Congress.

"This is a tremendous honor for PJ and for the Fifth District," Burr said. "The nomination process for the congressional page program is extremely competitive. To receive an

appointment is a great accomplishment. PJ has exhibited excellent citizenship, and she has shown a great interest in our government and how it works."

Amos is a member of R.J. Reynolds High School Band and Union Baptist Church. She is the recipient of several writing awards including those for the "Dangerous Minds Essay Contest" sponsored by MCA Records and the YMCA Black Achievers Essay Contest.

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Pridgen "PJ" Amos, right, works as a page in the U.S. House of Representatives. U.S. Rep. Richard Burr, left, nominated Amos for the position. She is a junior at Reynolds High School.

Winston-Salem Chronicle

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Blacks charged in fire at black church in N.C.

WHITEVILLE, N.C. (AP) - Two African-American men were arrested last week and charged with arson in the burning last month of a black church, one of more than 36 such fires under investigation across the South.

Rodney Bullock and Curtis Gilbert Jr. are charged with burning a building they were remodeling at Mount Tabor Baptist Church in Cerro Gordo on May 23. Cerro Gordo is about 20 miles west of Whiteville in Columbus County.

Bullock, 21 of Fairbluff, was charged with one count of unlawful burning of a church. Gilbert, 32, of Winnebow was charged with conspiracy to commit arson. The suspects were scheduled to appear in court last week.

Greg Rideout, a spokesman for Attorney General Mike Easley, said there was "absolutely no evidence" the fire was racially motivated. Authorities declined to discuss a possible motive.

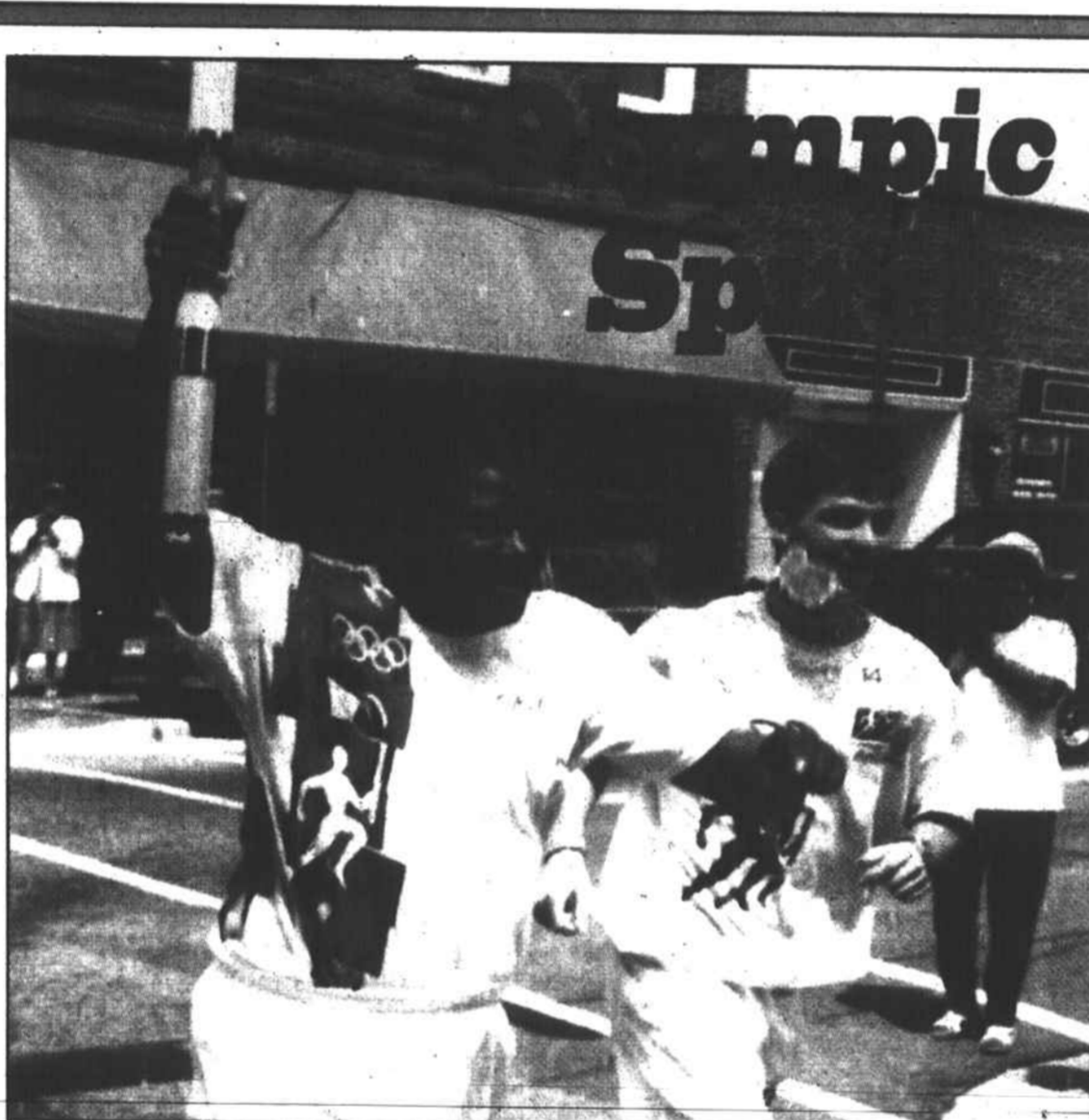
Gilbert is a contractor who was hired to remodel a former school on the church grounds for use as an education building. Bullock was his employee.

Sheriff Jimmy Ferguson said an anonymous tip the day after the fire led authorities to the suspects.

"We had to make sure that we were looking at the right people," Ferguson said.

In neighboring Robeson County, authorities ruled out race as a motive in the arson of the largely black Pleasant

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Lesmond "Buddy" Hayes Jr., left, a coach for the Tri-City Relays in Winston-Salem, carries the Olympic Torch on Sixth Street this week. Several hundred people gathered along downtown streets to see runners carrying the torch under a hot June sun. The flame is making its way through North Carolina to Atlanta, the site of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games.

Legislature passes charter school reform

From Chronicle Staff Reports

Vernon Robinson, a former Winston-Salem State University professor and the first African-American candidate nominated for State Superintendent, celebrated last week when the N.C. General Assembly passed a Charter School Bill before it adjourned its summer session.

Robinson, 40, and president of the N.C. Education Reform Foundation, led the three-year effort to pass charter school legislation.

Charter schools are public schools that are largely free of the red tape and bureaucracy that plague traditional public schools. In exchange for relief from red tape, the teachers and other staff at charter schools must deliver on the level of student performance promised in the chartering document.

Failure to do so would result in revocation of the charter and the closing of the school.

"Public schools that fail go on and continue to maim children," Robinson said. "Charter schools that fail go out of business." Charter schools have no attendance zone. The charter personnel must convince parents that the program at the school has something to offer children.

Charter schools are funded according to the number of students enrolled, as if the school were a school district. The 100 charters authorized by the statute may be issued

Please see LEGISLATURE A10

Church holds seminar in response to fires

By JOHN HINTON
Chronicle Senior Staff Writer

A group of 37 people gathered at Goler Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church last weekend to discuss ways to protect their churches from fires.

"This business of church burnings is not anything that we should take lightly," said the Rev. Seth O. Lartey, pastor of Goler Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church. "It is a scheme of the enemy to divide this nation."

More than 40 fires have destroyed mostly black churches in the South since January 1995. The Associated Press reported last week that authorities have made arrests in four of the fires that occurred in North Carolina.

Those arrested include two black laborers, a white volunteer firefighter and a 13-year-old white girl described by

police as harboring anti-Christian and anti-black sentiments.

"We are dealing with a Satanic movement," Lartey said. "The enemy is seeking to kill and destroy."

The participants discussed topics such as insurance, security, emergency response, banking policies, historical properties and spiritual dimensions regarding their churches.

"We have to be more protective of our churches and its members," said William H. Tatum, president of the Winston-Salem branch of the NAACP.

He warned the participants to watch for suspicious packages received in the mail. These packages may contain bombs that explode when the packaged is opened, Tatum said.

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William McKiver, bottom right, of Goler Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church leads a discussion with the other participants of a seminar about the recent church burnings. The event attracted 37 people to the church.

Children prepare for first Triad YMCA Summer Olympics

By MAURICE CROCKER
Community News Reporter

This summer Triad youth are training and preparing for a "Summer Olympics." But one doesn't have to go to Atlanta to see their performance.

Children from eight Triad YMCA's are going to participate in the Triad's first Character Building Olympics, scheduled for July 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at West Forsyth High School.

"Recently there has been a lot of

emphasis placed on individuals' character. So we decided to have an athletic event to help develop the character of our youth," said Sam Brown, vice president of metro services for the YMCA.

The Olympics, he said, is a good way to strengthen the four areas that have been targeted for improvement: caring, honesty, responsibility, and

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Police Chief George Sweat works with children at YMCAs in Winston-Salem preparing for the Character Building Olympics, a program designed to cultivate good values in children.

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This Week in Black History

July 2, 1881
President Garfield shot in Washington, D.C.
He died on September 19 and was succeeded by Vice-President Chester A. Arthur.



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