

Fire destroys Saints Delight Church

By DAMON FORD
THE CHRONICLE

Fire destroyed a black church in Winston-Salem during the wee hours of Sunday morning. Saints Delight Church located at 460 Barry Street in East Winston was engulfed in flames when a fire broke out in the pastor's office and spread to the sanctuary of the tiny white church.

After arriving on the scene at 5:57 a.m. Winston-Salem firefighters were able to put the fire

out 21 minutes later.

No probable cause for the fire has been determined by fire investigators.

"We can't find an accidental electrical cause for the fire," said K.R. West, assistant fire marshal and leader of the post-fire investigation.

When asked about the possibility of arson West said that it was suspected but they haven't found any concrete evidence. According to West, official shope to have more answers by the end

of the week.

"I'm crushed in a way of speaking," said Bishop Evelyn Timmons, who has pastored Saints Delight since 1997. "I really had that community at heart. We've fed those people, we've clothed those people."

Estimated property damages to the small white church came to \$25,000. According to Timmons her office is completely destroyed while the smoke and intense heat destroyed the sanctuary including the organ and drum set.

Sunday's fire adds Saints Delight to a growing list of hundreds of churches that have burned since 1995. According to the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, who have investigated the fires, 724 churches have burned down since 1995. More than 300 of the fires have been set at black churches.

According to officials at the Congress of National Black Churches, an ecumenical organi-

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Photo by Damon Ford
Saints Delight Church near Forest Ridge Apartments on Barry Street caught fire early Sunday.

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State Champs

Parkland takes 3A title

By SAM DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

CHAPEL HILL - The final result was what Parkland had in view when it began the 1998-99 basketball season.

The Mustangs concluded the most successful season in the history of the school with a 101-83 victory over West Rowan to earn the State 3-A title last Saturday at the Dean E. Smith Center.

Danny Gathings led the way for the Mustangs, pouring in a career-high 36 points.

"I just let the game come to me," Gathings said. "I had a feeling that I was going to have a big game. I knew it was going to be my night."

It was. Gathings connected on 14 of 20 field goals, eight of 10 free throws, pulled down 12 rebounds, dished out three assists, had three steals and four blocked shots.

With his offensive production, Parkland didn't have to rely on Clifford Crawford, its point guard and leading scorer, who was bothered by foul trouble. Crawford still managed 20 points, six assists and six rebounds in 24 minutes of play.

But it was the play of Brandon Bowman, Brandon Isaiah and Camden Banner, who all stepped up offensively to help the Mustangs record their first state championship in basketball. Banner scored 14 points on six of nine shooting from the field and also grabbed six rebounds and handed out five assists in 21 minutes of play. Isaiah also came off the Mustangs' bench to match Banner, with 14 points. He had nine rebounds and two steals.

Coach Mike Pennington of Parkland gave the team credit for its focus.

"We had our sights on this



Photo by Bruce Champman
Danny Gathings rides in for a dunk for Parkland. Gathings scored 36 points as the Mustangs galloped to a 101-83 victory over West Rowan.

all year long," Pennington said. "I thought the kids did an excellent job of knowing what they had to do and going out and doing it."

The Mustangs had few occasions throughout the year when they looked like they might not meet their expectation. That was also the case in

the title game. Parkland fought off an early flurry by West Rowan to take control of the game in the first quarter. But that wasn't the end of the story. The Mustangs then had to talk their way through a West Rowan rally in the second quarter. The Falcons went on a 14-8 run to take a 34-32 lead

with 4:31 remaining in the half. Pennington called timeout to calm his troops for a moment.

"For a moment, we got too caught up in being in the state championship game," Pennington said. "I told them to just

See Parkland on A8

Lyons resigns as Baptist president

By PAT LEISNER
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. - The Rev. Henry Lyons, president of one of the nation's largest and most influential black denominations, sobbed and apologized as he resigned Tuesday, two weeks after being convicted of swindling more than \$4 million.

"I'm just so sorry about all of this," he said quietly at a news conference outside his Bethel Metropolitan Baptist Church, where he told the board of the National Baptist Convention USA of his decision.

"I'm truly repentant about it. I hate that I hurt so many people," he said, his voice breaking.

He was surrounded by other ministers, who told him: "You're not alone."

"I appreciate it," he said as he began sobbing. The Rev. E.V. Hill, who will run for president when the convention's next elections are held in September, patted Lyons on the back and told him: "We are with you. We forgive any errors you have made. We love you."

Lyons' wife, Deborah, then kissed him on the cheek and defense attorney Denis de Vlaming helped lead him back into the church where he has been pastor for the past 27 years.

Lyons, 57, is awaiting sentencing March 31. He faces three to seven years in prison under state sentencing guidelines. He is also expected to plead guilty to similar federal charges.

The Rev. S.C. Cureton of Mauldin, S.C., the convention's vice presi-

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President Clinton tackles brutality

Spurred by black activists, Clinton treads murky waters of law enforcement

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

At the urging of civil rights groups, President Bill Clinton unveiled several proposals aimed at curbing what many consider an upsurge in police brutality cases.

Surrounded by leaders from the NAACP, the National Council of La Raza and the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium as well as Justice Department officials like Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder and Attorney General for Civil Rights Bill Lann Lee, Clinton presented the 21st Century Policing Initiative during his weekly radio address last week. The proposal, which has yet to be sent to Congress, will earmark more \$40 million to help reduce crime and increase the public's trust in law enforcement.

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Freshman whizzes through first semester

The following article is part of an ongoing series about Brian Graham, a freshman at North Carolina Agricultural and State University. Through Brian's eyes, Chronicle readers will see what it's like to be a freshman at a historically black college.

By DAMON FORD
THE CHRONICLE

Spring break. For most college students it's a time to kick back relax and have some fun in the sun.

But that wasn't the case for North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University freshman Brian Graham last week.

Instead of heading to the beach for a little rest and relaxation, the 18-year-old accounting major threw

some clothes into his car and headed west down I-40 to Hickory - his hometown.

During the week Graham worked and hung out with friends. In between, he managed to dispense advice on how to survive life at a major university.

"A lot of the high school seniors ask about college and you give them first hand information," he said, sagely.

And Graham's advice may be worth its weight in gold. While many of his freshman counterparts struggled to get through first semester, Graham pulled an impressive 3.82 grade point average - enough to put him on the Dean's List.

"I was shooting for a 4.0 but I was satisfied with a 3.8. When I left for the break I thought I had all A's,"

he said. "This semester I have easier classes but harder professors ... (but) I expect a 3.8."

Graham's five "As" and one "B" are a matter of "focus," he says.

"I guess it depends on where your focus is," he said. "When I was in high school my mind was academically focused so when I came to college my priorities were on that. Some people are a little more mature than others. It all goes back to time management."

With 17 more hours of school work on his plate this semester, Graham has to work harder. Right now his astronomy and Spanish courses are giving him problems.

"I've just got to keep working," Graham said. "In high school (Spanish teachers) spoke English

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It's magic time



Students at Carter G. Woodson school of challenge held their first talent show last week. For the full story see page A3.

